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F.O.

424

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS

OF

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 9305.]

214

January to March 1908.

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January to March 1908.

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Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 9305.]

[78]

No. 1.

Baron von Stumm to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 1, 1908.)

German Embassy, December 31, 1907.

Your Excellency,

ON the 17th instant, the Imperial Embassy gave Sir Charles Hardinge to understand that they were ready to l v before the British Government papers connected with the complaint of the German firm R. Wönckhaus and Co., relative to the mines of oxide of iron at Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf. These papers have now reached the Embassy and I have the honour to transmit them herewith, with copies of the inclosures in duplicate.

On the assumption that as the action of the Sheikh of Shargah, which has given rise to the German firm's complaint, took place, as far as can be ascertained, with the help of a British man-of-war and apparently in the presence of a British Consul, the British Government is now, or will be shortly in possession of detailed information with regard thereto, I have the honour to express the hope that your Excellency will communicate in the same open way to the German Government the papers in possession of the British Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) STUMM

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Complaint of the German Firm R. Wönckhaus and Co. against the Sheikh of Shargah.

ACCORDING to papers, copies of which are in possession of the German Government, Salem-bin-Sultan, uncle of the ruling Sheikh of Shargah (Segger-bin-Chalid), is the owner of iron oxide mines on the island of Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf, which appears to be included in the territory of the Sheikh of Shargah.

In 1898 Salem-bin-Sultan by a document (Inclosure 1) leased his iron oxide mines on Abu Musa for a fixed yearly rent to a Company consisting of three British subjects, of whom a certain Hadschi Hassan-ben-Ali Samaye, as the eldest, conducted the affairs of the lessors.

In 1899 the Company, consisting of the three lessors, admitted the reigning Sheikh of Shargah (Segger-bin-Chalid) into the Company, so that the Company of lessors now consisted of four persons with equal rights therein. The Sheikh soon transferred his share to another person, Jussuf-bin-Abdullah. The latter sold his share subsequently to Hadschi Hassan-bin-Ali Samaye, the above-mentioned managing partner of the Company. The latter sold his share in October 1907 to the British subject Mr. Thomas Brown, of Lingah, and a few days later he (Mr. Brown) sold the

share to the German firm R. Wönckhaus and Co., of Lingah (Inclosures 4 A to 4 E). These documents are attached to the last sheet of the original of the lease).

The Company of lessors, therefore, consists apparently to-day of three British subjects and the German firm R. Wöcnkhaus and Co.

The lease of the Company appears to be legally constituted; this was recognized by the reigning Sheikh of Shargah, since he himself was, for a time a partner in the Company.

It appears, therefore, that an absolutely legitimate commercial business is concerned.

In the last few months the Sheikh has addressed to the above-mentioned British subject Hadschi Hassan-bin-Ali Samaye, the managing partner, several communications (Inclosures 12, 16, 21, 22) of which the last is said to have been handed to Samaye in the presence of the British Consular Agent at Lingah. In these communications he demanded that the working of the mines at Abu Musa should be stopped.

Further, in October 1907 the Sheikh sent armed men to the island, who forcibly expelled the miners and prevented the mines being worked.

The boats with the Sheikh's armed men were towed to Abu Musa by the British man-of-war "Lapwing," on board of which is said to have been Lieutenant C. H. Gabriel, British Consul at Bander Abbas.

When a few days later, after the departure of the British man-of-war, the British subject, Mr. Thomas Brown, in the employment of the German firm R. Wönckhaus, who are partners in the Company, and later another employé, said to be a German, of the same house approached the island in order to land there, they were compelled to return by shots from the Sheikh's armed men.

By the forcible measures and the apparently in every respect illegal conduct of the Sheikh of Shargah, the Company—and as far as regards their share in the Company the German firm R. Wönckhaus and Co.—have been prevented from enjoying the lease granted to the Company by the proprietor of the mines, Salem-bin-Sultan, the uncle of the reigning Sheikh. The Company is thereby suffering losses since they have entered into contracts to deliver fixed quantities of iron oxide at a fixed price (Inclosures 5, 19).

In particular, the managing partner has entered into a contract (Inclosure 5), dated the 1st June, 1906, with the German merchant, Herr Robert Wönckhaus, of Lingah (partner in the above-mentioned firm R. Wönckhaus and Co.), under which 2,000 to 5,000 tons are to be delivered yearly, for four years to Herr Wönckhaus from the Abu Musa mines. The Company have also undertaken to deliver 400 tons yearly during five years in India (Inclosure 19).

In both cases it is clearly a question of perfectly legitimate business operations as practised all over the world.

The documents in possession of the Imperial Government lead them to certain conclusions with regard to the motives which have caused this conduct on the part of the Sheikh. In the above-mentioned communications from the Sheikh to the managing partner, Mr. Samaye, it is said:—

1. That the young Isa-bin-Abdul Latif, one of the partners in the Company, had complained to him, the Sheikh, that the contract with Robert Wönckhaus had been concluded without his previous knowledge. This partner and he, the Sheikh, did not approve the contract. Samaye was not entitled without their approval to conclude a contract with regard to the whole production of the mines for a long period. They would suffer losses if they approved the contract (Inclosure 12);

2. That the Sheikh feared that the mines and the island might be taken out of his possession (Inclosure 16, Confidential, also Inclosure 20);

3. That in the lease of 1898 there was no provision allowing the whole production of the mines to be transferred to a foreigner without his approval. The Sheikh is thus speaking as if he had himself concluded the lease of 1898 with the lessors' Company (Inclosure 22).

It is obvious that the Sheikh Segger-bin-Chalid did not conclude the lease of 1898 (Inclosure 1). This was done by his uncle, Salem-bin-Sultan, acting within his own rights, and the Sheikh recognized this by the fact that he himself was for a certain time a partner in the Company.

It is true that the lease of 1898 contained no provision with regard to the sale of the production of the mines to foreigners. In view of the recognized liberty of trade in the Persian Gulf it is to be inferred from the omission of such a prohibition that the conclusion of contracts with foreigners was without doubt within the powers of the Company, and not the reverse.

The contract concluded in June 1906 between the Company and the German Herr R. Wönckhaus, to which the Sheikh refers is, therefore, according to the lease granted in 1898 by the Sheikh's uncle, absolutely admissible and legally unassailable. The Sheikh's fear that in consequence of the contract he might lose possession of the mines and the island is senseless. Apart from the fact that the mines do not belong to the Sheikh but to his Uncle Salem, the contract only grants to Herr Wönckhaus the right to receive at a fixed price during the fixed time of four years the greater part of the production of the mines—an arrangement such as any merchant could conclude when the opportunity offered. The contract does not refer lo the acquisition of the mines themselves or of the Island of Abu Musa, or to any separation of the island from the Sheikh's territory, and it has no such aim in view. Herr Wönckhaus is a merchant like any other, he is not pursuing any political objects, and in concluding the contract he has only made use of the right belonging to him, as to every merchant, to transact business which appears profitable to him.

It is not true, as is shown by the contract of 1906, to say that Herr Wönckhaus has bought the whole production of the mines. But even if he had done so there would be no objection to a business transaction such as takes place everywhere unhindered. That the contract might cause losses to the Company, may indicate that it would perhaps be possible for the Company to conclude a more favourable contract for themselves. If this were the case, there would even then be no legal objection to the contract.

It may be the case that the contract was concluded without the knowledge of the Sheikh. Meanwhile there is no reason why this contract should have required the approval of the Sheikh, as it was merely a legal and purely business transaction.

It does not appear to be the case that the contract was concluded without the agreement of one of the partners of the Company, Isa-bin-Abdul Latif, as the managing parter Samaye informed Isa's father Abdul Latif, who represented his son in all matters concerning the Company, at once of the conclusion of the contract, and the latter approved the contract in his reply (Inclosure 6). According to a later letter of the father, Abdul Latif (Inclosure 8), his son Isa appears to recognize the contract as legally valid, although he would have liked to have seen it before its conclusion, as he describes its abrogation simply as "preferable," and in the next letter of Abdul Latif senior (Inclosure 10) the latter says definitely that he had originally approved the contract on behalf of his son.

Even if one of the partners desires to attack the validity of the contract of 1906 by stating that it required his consent, which had not been obtained, yet it is impossible to see how this gives the Sheikh the right to abrogate by force the lease of 1898 granted by his uncle Salem.

This would appear, therefore, to be a question of a purely arbitrary, and, from the legal point of view, absolutely indefensible proceeding on the part of the Sheikh of Shargah against the lessors' Company.

This illegal action affects directly the German firm R. Wönckhaus and Co. as partners in the Company, and is not a claim raised by the German firm against the other partners in the Company.

Their complaint is based on their own rights as partners in the Company, and it will be the Sheikh's duty to compensate the German partner as well as the other partners in the Company, who are British subjects, for his illegal action.

The losses which have accrued to the Company are very considerable, as they cannot evade the obligations assumed by them in the above-mentioned contracts (Inclosures 5 and 19), especially in the contract (Inclosure 5) concluded in 1906 with the German Herr Wönckhaus, which contract appears to have caused the Sheikh to commit his act of aggression. Through this contract immediate losses are incurred by the Company, as they have been prevented by the forcible measures of the Sheikh from delivering 2,000 tons of iron oxide to Herr Wönckhaus which had already been extracted, and which ought to have been shipped weeks ago. Further losses will be caused by the fact that the Company is not in a position to extract at the proper time the quantities of iron oxide which they must keep ready for the deliveries due in the coming months. As Herr Wönckhaus, on his side, has already resold the iron oxide to his shipper, and now in order to fulfil this obligation must buy iron oxide elsewhere at a high price, it is obvious that the loss accruing to the Company through the counter-claim of Herr Wönckhaus amounts to a large sum, and will be greatly increased by any further prevention of the working of the mines.

The Imperial Government consider therefore that it is urgently necessary to settle the matter at once and think that the British Government will agree with them, in view

of the fact that the other partners of the Company, who are suffering equally from the arbitrary action of the Sheikh, are British subjects.

In the first place, it will be necessary that the Sheikh of Shargah, in order to avoid further losses, should, without delay, allow the Company to work the iron oxide mines on the island of Abu Musa.

Later on it will be necessary to deal with the question of compensation for the losses suffered by the Company.

It will also be necessary to consider whether the circumstance that armed men of the Sheikh's fired on employés of Wönckhaus who who wished to land on the island requires special reparation on the part of the Sheikh. Mr. Thomas Brown, whose life was seriously endangered, is, as already stated, a British subject, while the nationality of the other employé concerned, who describes himself as a German, requires to be established.

Berlin, December , 1907.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Papers connected with the Complaint of the German Firm R. Wönckhaus and Co. relative to the Mines of Oxide of Iron at Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf.

(Inclosure 1.)

AT the request of Sheikh Salem-ben-Sultan, I hereby certify all that is written down in this paper.

(Signed and sealed)—
ABDUL RAHMAN-BEN-FARES,
Servant of Law.

In the name of Merciful and Almighty God.

This document appears in two copies.

Be it known to everybody that I, Salem-ben-Sultan-ben-Sagher El Kasemi, have leased all the mines of oxide of iron which are in the Island of Abu Musa to the generous Haji Hassan-ben-Ali Semey, Abdulla-ben-Hassan, and Isa-ben-Abdul Latif, from to-day for any period they choose to possess the said mines, paying us annually 250 dollars. I have also agreed with them against payment of a rent of 100 dollars per annum to allow them to discharge mother-of-pearls shells if they desire it. I have permitted them to dig wells for workmen employed in the exide mines. I bind myself to show their employés of the oxide mines protection and benevolence. Should I at any former date have made any contracts they are not valid, only this contract which is written in two identical copies holds good. This I hereby declare openly.

Enforce from this 18th day of Zilkade, 1315.

(Signed and sealed) SALEM-BEN-SULTAN.

Witness to this:—

1. Set his hand Yoosef-ben-Abdullah.
2. Set his hand and seal Abdul Latif-ben-Abdul Rahman.
3. „ „ „ Ahmed-ben-Abdul Rahman.
4. I set my signature and seal to contents of this document.

(Signed) AHMED-BEN-SULTAN
(Brother of Sheikh Salem).

(Inclosure 2.)

In the name of the Almighty.

This document appears in three copies of which each possess one.

In accordance with the contents of this contract, I, Nakhoda Ali-ben-Ahmed Saleh, have agreed to enter into partnership with Haji Hassan-ben-Ali Semey, Abdulla-ben-Hassan, and Isa-ben-Abdul Latif, in the leasehold of oxide of iron mines and others. I, Nakhoda Ali, have agreed to act as supervisor of the work in the mines of the oxide of iron, and whatever expenses may be incurred shall be borne by all, and the net profits to be divided amongst all. I have also agreed to enter into partnership regarding the rent of 100 dollars arranged with Sheikh Salem for discharding m.o.p. shells in the Island of Abu Musa, and the sale, loading, and shipping are to be made by the knowledge of all, and upon this condition partnership has been entered upon, and none of them shall deviate from it. Be it known.

Dated Zilhaje, 1315.

(Signed and sealed)—
ALI AHMED SALEH.
HASSAN-BEN-ALI SEMEY.
ABDULLA-BEN-HASSAN.
(On behalf of Isa-ben-Abdul Latif),
ABDUL LATIF-BEN-ABDUL RAHMAN

(Inclosure 3.)

In the name of Merciful and Almighty God.

This document appears in two copies.

In accordance with the contents of this contract, I, Sheikh Seger-ben-Khalet-ben-Sultan, Chief of Shargah, enter into partnership from this date with Haji Hassan-ben-Ali Semey, Abdulla-ben-Hassan, and Isa-ben-Abdul Latif, in the mines of oxide of iron in the Island of Abu Musa, which they have got in lease from Sheikh Salem for an annual payment of 250 dollars for so long as the mines are workable and in lease. And I, Sheikh Seger, also agree to endeavour and render all assistance in my power for facilitating the work of the mines. For instance, if they wish to have boats for transporting and men for working in the mines that could be available in Shargah, after settling their wages, that they agree upon, I bind myself to send with all quickest despatch to the island. I also agree to enter into partnership regarding the rent arranged with Sheikh Salem-ben-Sultan for 100 dollars per annum for discharging m.o.p. shells in the Island of Abu Musa, and whatever expenses may be incurred in working the mines of the oxide of iron, they shall be borne by all the partners in the contract of the said oxide mines, and whatever the net profit may amount to, will be divided amongst them all. Be it known.

Dated 1st Rabi-ul-Sani, 1316.

(Signed and sealed) SEGER-BEN-KHALET.

Witness:

Set his hand and seal, Ahmed-ben-Sultan (brother of Sheikh Salem).
Set his hand and seal, Abdul Latif-ben-Abdul Rahmen.
Set his hand, Ahmed-ben-Abdul Rahmen.

(Inclosure 4 A.)

In the name of . . . . God.

In accordance with the contents of this contract we, who have mentioned our names in this contract, have taken into partnership Sheikh Saker-bin-Khaled in the leasehold of mines of oxide of iron in the Island of Abu Musa, which we have taken in lease from

Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan for an annual payment of 250 dollars and 100 dollars as rent if we discharge m.o.p. shells in Abu Musa for commercial purposes.

Sheikh Saker has also arranged with us to render all possible assistance in his power in order to avoid any stoppage (delay) of work in the mines of the red oxide of iron; and whatever expenditure of the mines may amount to shall be borne by all the partners, and the net profits will be divided amongst them all. On this condition the contract is concluded. Be this known.

P.S.—And Sheikh Saker has the full power to get out of this partnership of the said oxide of iron, if he choses to do so.

Dated the 1st Rabia Sani, 1316.

(Signed and sealed) HASSAN-BIN-ALI SEMEYYE.
ABDULLAH-BIN-HASSAN.
ISA-BIN-ABDUL LATIF.

Witness:
(Signed and sealed)—
ABDUL LATIF-BIN-ABDUL RAHMAN.

(Inclosure 4 B.)

In the name of . . . . God.

Be it known to whosoever sees this paper that this partnership, regarding the oxide of iron, in which I, in accordance with this document, transfer to Yoosif-bin-Abdullah, and same is his, and he has the power to make use of it. I have nothing more to do with it. Profits and losses concern him only, and unto him is due from me all possible assistance in case he meets with any difficulty in this. Be this known.

Dated the 17th Ramazan, 1316.

(Signed and sealed) SAKER-BIN-KHALED.

(Inclosure 4 C.)

In the name of . . . . God.

Well I, Yoosif-bin-Abdullah, sold to Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Semeyye all and entire share of oxide mines mentioned herein, and which I have obtained from Sheikh Saker-bin-Khaled. The mentioned share is now the property of Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Semeyye, and I renounce all my rights in the said share. I have received payment of a sum of 400 dollars, being the price thereof.

Dated the 15th Shaban, 1316.

(Signed and sealed) YOOSI-BIN-KHALED.

Witness:
(Signed and sealed)—
ABDUL LATIF-BIN-ABDUL RAHMAN.

(Inclosure 4 D.)

I, Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Semeyye, have sold to Mr. Th. Brown all and entire share of the oxide mines mentioned herein which I have obtained by purchase from Yoosif-bin-Abdullah, and the said share is now the property of Mr. Thomas Brown, and it is his, and I renounce all rights to it. Profits and losses concern him only. I have received 6,000 rupees, being the price of the share.

Dated the 10th October, 1907.

(Signed and sealed) HAJI HASSAN-BIN-SEMEYYE.

(Inclosure 4 E.)

(Translation.)

I hereby certify that I have to-day sold my share, together with all my rights and obligations, to Messrs. Robert Wönckhaus and Co. for the sum of 11,000 rupees (eleven thousand).

(Signed) THOMAS BROWN.

Lingah, October 16, 1907.

(Inclosure 5.)

Contract between Mr. Hassan-ben-Ali Semey, Owner and Holder of Ben Musa Concession, and Robert Wönckhaus, in Lingah.

Hassan-ben-Semey agrees to deliver to Mr. Robert Wönckhaus, Lingah, during four years, beginning with the 1st June, 1906, every year 2,000 to 5,000 tons of 20 cwts. oxide of iron of the Island Ben Musa, same quality as the 700 tons shipped by Mr. Robert Wönckhaus in March 1906. Mr. Robert Wönckhaus agrees to take at least every year 2,000 tons, and if he wants so and there is sufficient good stuff on the island of which he approves, up to 5,000 tons yearly.

The price is fixed at 15*s.* 6*d.* per ton of 20 cwts., usual weight conditions, f.o.b. steamer "Ben Musa," to be weighed on board.

Hassan-ben-Semey gives the entire monopoly of Abu Musa oxide to Mr. Robert Wönckhaus. During the term of the contract he is not allowed to sell or dispose of otherwise any quantity of Ben Musa during the term of this contract, but it is agreed upon that Hassan is permitted to export to India for his account during this year what he has sold already in India, and which he gives as 700 tons, and besides that every year from 1907 about 5,000–6,000 bags of 1 cwt. (four thousand to five thousand bags). Hassan-ben-Semey has to deliver daily alongside, if in bays, 200 tons, or in bulk 150 tons, weather permitting. Payment for every lot which is to be shipped: half the amount when the lot is ordered, and the other half when it is being shipped.

Advance to be paid by Mr. Robert Wönckhaus to Hassan-ben-Semey 2,000 rupees whenever Hassan calls for it, and receipt to be taken for it. This advance to remain with Hassan-ben-Semey until the end of this contract.

Whenever this contract comes to an end Mr. Robert Wönckhaus has the preference for a new contract of Ben Musa, if he desire so, at the same price and condition, or at any rate at the price of other serious buyers. Alone the English text of the contract will hold good.

(Signed) HAGE HASSAN-BEN-ALI SEMEY AND Co.

Lingah, June 1, 1906.

(Inclosure 6.)

Abdul Latif-ben-Abdul Rahmen to Haji Hassan-ben-Ali Semey.

(After compliments.) *Sharjah, 21st Rabi-ul-Sani,* 1324.

Your former and present letters have reached me, and it gives me pleasure to note that you are in good health. What you have written regarding the question of the oxide of iron which, by the will of God, you sold to Wönckhaus, the German, at 15*s.* a-ton, and arranged to deliver 2,000 tons every year and all the expenses to be paid you, his price being nett, all right. I hope it is good. It is a pleasure after all the trouble. Abdulla, under all circumstances, must be recalled to supervize the work, as it would not go on properly without him. But abstain from engaging yourself in any contract which may resemble a leasehold or any other engagements which might occasion any row. Our officials would be displeased, and would not like it. You, by the mercy of God, are wise, and will not show any negligence, because in these days there are a lot of tricks played by people. In short, this news gives pleasure in case, we are not put into difficulties as in former years.

(Signed) ABDUL LATIF-BEN-ABDULLA RAHMAN.

(Inclosure 7.)

Abdul Latif to Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Semeyye.

(After compliments.) *14th Shaban*, 1324.

I inform you that my wish is that you send me a copy of the contract which has passed between you and the Germans regarding the export of oxide to Calcutta. Please send it soon, because the Consul has asked me for it. I hope Abdullah will soon arrive at Lingah after having finished work as de ired, and it will be a pleasure to all of us to hear of his arrival. Please inform me of your good health always. I hold myself at your disposal.

(Signed) ABDUL LATIF.

(Inclosure 8.)

Abdul Latif-bin-Abdur Rahman to Haye Hassan-ben-Ali Sameye.

(After compliments.) *8th Sihul Hadj*, 1324.

Your respected favour has arrived, and I have understood the contents, also the copy of the contract which you have made with the Germans for the sale of Ben Musa oxide has been understood by me. My son Isa does not agree to the contract with these conditions, and you neither consulted him, nor did you send a copy of the contract before you concluded the oxide business with the Germans, so as to compare your ideas and work in concordance. Obviously it is necessary that a partner engages himself only after consulting his partners in order to avoid trouble. You have entered into this work without having his opinion; for this reason my son Isa does not agree to the contract which exists between you and the Germans, because Isa fears the trouble that may arise in consequence of taking strangers into this business. The cession (cessation?) of this contract would be preferable to its continuance. I have written you before not to engage yourself in the oxide business with the Germans, because he fears bad consequences. So says my son Isa. Be this known to you.

(Signed) ABDUL LATIF-BEN-ABDUR RAHMAN.

(Inclosure 9.)

Haye Hassan-ben-Ali to Abdul Latif-ben-Abdur Rahman.

(After compliments.) *Lingah, 15th Shaban*, 1323.

It is a long while since we have heard from you. I have written you a letter some time ago, and hope you have received it. Therein I informed you that three months previous I had sold to the Germans about 800 tons beaten oxide as desired by them. In order to facilitate work, I have sent my brother Hamed with coolies to dig the oxide and put it into bags, and up to now we have been waiting for bags, but have not yet obtained a sufficient number. I hope, after arrival of this quantity and approval of it, they will arrange to take a quantity from us every year.

(Inclosure 10.)

Abdul Latif to Haye Hassan-ben-Ali.

(After compliments.) *12th Safar*, 1325.

I have received your letter and noted contents. When I received your letter saying that you had sold to the Germans of the oxide of the Island of Abu Musa 2,000 tons every year at 15*s.* per ton, my reply, under date of 21st Rebic-el-Thani, 1324, shows that I agreed, but it contained a warning that your engagements should not resemble a leasehold or something which might occasion a row, and which would displease our officials. We requested you to give us a guarantee that there would be no trouble; the mentioned letter is certainly in your possession, the contents admit of no doubt. After receipt of the copy of the contract, which we demanded frequently, on

the 5th Dhul Kada, 1324, and which was written in English, and of which we acknowledged receipt on the 6th Dhul Kada, 1324, and after we found somebody to translate it, we found that you had entered engagements against which we had warned you, and that you had bound yourself to a leasehold, for which reason my son Isa does not agree to the contract which takes the working and management of the mines from our hands. We informed you of this before on the 8th Dhul Hadj, when Isa saw the conditions of the contract; and when you see the inclosed translation of the contract you will understand that the question is not as you have understood it, only a sale, but a leasehold against which we warned you. Sheikh Seger-ben-Khalet does not agree to your giving a leasehold of oxide to strangers of foreign Powers, and asserts that the arrangement is that the partners themselves only work as they have done for the last few years. It is not known that you gave leaseholds before this. This it was necessary to inform you, so that you might know it and do something to undo all the trouble.

(Signed) ABDUL LATIF-BEN-ABDUR RAHMAN.

(Inclosure 11.)

Haye Hassan-ben-Ali Semey to Abdul Latif-ben-Abdur Rahman.

(After compliments.) *15th Safar*, 1325.

I have received your letter and noted contents. Regarding the contract with the Germans, which you say is not, as I have explained before, sale of oxide only, my friend, I am convinced that it is a sale of oxide only for a certain period, and a certain quantity every year until the contract expires. It is not a leasehold for the island. The agreement and conditions are as follows: He agrees to take every year a fixed quantity, and we agree to dig it from the mines and deliver it as long as there is oxide, just as it has been customary before. From everybody who sells something a sale contract is taken; this is not a leasehold once for ever, and you know that neither the Germans nor anybody else have any power over me; but perhaps you have been forced to this correspondence. The Germans bought oxide only, nothing else, from the owners of the leasehold of the oxide mines in Abu Musa, Hage-ben-Ali Semey and Co. We have arranged that if we deliver the oxide in Lingah and pay the transport expenses, he has no objections and is quite agreeable, and will not insist on going to the island and possess himself of it. Also you wrote me saying that perhaps I could cancel the contract. I spoke to him about it. He answered: "If you say that we have intentions with the island, we shall give you a letter that we have nothing whatever to do with it; we have only bought oxide from the leaseholders of the oxide mines in Abu Musa for a fixed period, just as other people buy from you. We do a large business with all the merchants on the Persian and Arabian coasts, and have never had trouble with the people. If you do not accept this letter and you want to be released from the contract, all right, pay us for every ton 15*s.*, as per contract, and also the advances which we have paid to you; when you have paid us that, we do not require the contract and shall return it. We insist upon our rights. We are not here to play at doing business, and we work and go in accordance with law." If you think it advisable, please write to them and explain to them; perhaps they will meet you. I cannot see my way to do anything contrary to the sale conditions until the contract expires. You are the Lord of the Learned; you know that I did this knowing that you were agreeable to it. The thing being done, it is better to stop this dispute. When the Germans agree to give you a letter according to your own wish, saying that they have bought oxide only from Hassan-ben-Ali Semey and Co., and have nothing to do with the leasehold or the island, that settles everything. You know that such a sale in one item is not obtainable every day, and we have a large amount invested since the date of the Concession; until now, who of the partners gave a single penny? And if we don't sell, who will give us our money? You know that a sale is debarrassing; when it is made it decreases the liabilities of the partners; when there is no sale, the partners must pay whatever the expenses are. After his arrival from Calcutta, Abdulla will close the books and show you everything. Please inform Isa of this.

(Signed) HASSAN-BEN-ALI SEMEY AND Co.

(Inclosure 12.)

Seger-ben-Khalet to Hassan-ben-Ali Semey.

(After compliments.) *9th Muharrem*, 1325.

We inform you that Isa-ben-Abdul Latif has lodged a complaint with us regarding the oxide mines in Abu Musa, which have been given in lease since some years in your name, and Isa-ben-Abdul Latif, and your son Abdulla, in accordance with the document dated the 18th Zulkada, 1315. He has sent us the copy of contract existing between you and Robert Wönckhaus, and presents a complaint saying that you have concluded this contract without consulting him, and after seeing it he does not agree to the conditions mentioned in the contract, and I also do not agree to this contract—under no circumstances. You have no right to give a contract of such a nature and bind yourself, and possess a third person of all that the mines yield for a long period, without consulting us or informing us at all.

As we will sustain a loss by allowing this contract regarding the Island of Abu Musa which is in your hands to continue, and you have acted in this unauthorized manner on our behalf, we have now thought it advisable to withdraw the leasehold from you. Now I inform you by this letter so that you may know that the contract is expired between us, and you have no right to make use of the mines in Abu Musa. Let this be known.

(Inclosure 13.)

Hassan-ben-Ali Semey to Sheikh Seger-ben-Khalet.

(After compliments.)

Your favour of this month's date received and contents noted. Regarding the letter, in which Abdul Latif agrees to the contract with the Germans, and at the same time warns us against giving a leasehold or something similar, yes, I have not acted contrary to that letter, and the Germans have nothing to do with the leasehold of that island. I have only sold oxide of iron. When Abdul Latif received answer to his letter it proved to him that I had not acted wrongly. I had only sold oxide of iron. We are responsible for nothing else but the sale of oxide of iron to the Germans. You say that I had stated that I am the owner of the island: how could I make such an assertion, as I have taken in lease only the mine of oxide of iron, which is in the Island of Abu Musa, from Sheikh Salem-ben-Sultan, and pay a certain sum as rent to Sheikh Salem every year according to the leasehold. But your statement that I had written that I am the leaseholder, it is right, and sale and management are in my hands. The partners know well, that from the beginning of the Concession the sale, expenditure, management, and requirements have been duly looked after by me, and from the date of the contract the entire management has been in my hands and none of the partners have interfered, nor had they any right to do so unless I had acted contrary to law. I quite admit that I am a British subject any abiding and do not deserve this unjustifiable interference, and you know that Germans have no other claim but the purchase of oxide for a certain period; and you are well aware that large amounts of our money have been invested in the oxide mines. If we do not obtain sales, how are we to repay the Germans and others? So much was necessary. Compliments to all.

(Inclosure 14.)

Hassan-ben-Ali Semey and Co. to the British Consul-General in Bushire.

(After compliments.) *22nd Muharrem*, 1325.

We beg to submit that on the 18th Muharrem, 1325, we received a letter from Sheikh Seger-ben-Khalet, Chief of Shargah, saying that Isa-ben-Abdul Latif has lodged a complaint with him to the effect that he does not agree to the contract which we have made with R. Wönckhaus, the German, asserting that it was made without his knowledge. Sheikh Seger also drops a hint that he wishes to withdraw the leasehold for the oxide of iron mines in Abu Musa which we leased from Sheikh Salem-ben-Sultan.

We, being British subjects, and seeing that the letter of Sheikh Seger has no meaning, we thought it necessary to inform you of this before they misrepresent the matter to you.

We hold the original leasehold from the Sheikh Salem-ben-Sultan of 1315, to be continued for any period we desire; attested by your agent, Abdul Latif, we accepted Sheikh Seger as a partner with the knowledge and evidence of Abdul Latif.

We made known our contract with the Germans and its conditions in Arabic and English to Abdul Latif. Then we received a letter from your agent, dated the 21st Rebie-el-Thani, 1324, regarding the contract with the Germans; in that letter he expresses his acceptance and gladness. We beg to inclose the copy of that letter. Also Isa was informed and agreed in the question; the letter of Sheikh Seger shows that he intends to stop the work and make us suffer a loss, for which reason we inclose copy of his letter before a dispute arises. You are our protectors, and it was necessary for us to inform you, because all our transactions and contracts were made with the knowledge and approval of Isa and Abdul Latif, and the original leasehold with their signatures are in our possession. If Abdul Latif had not approved he would have stopped me in the letter of the 21st Rebie-el-Thani, and I have only treated with the Germans with his approval, and in our contract with the Germans we have sold oxide only—a merchandize is for everybody, the Germans and others.

(Signed) HASSAN-BEN-ALI SEMEY AND Co.

(Inclosure 15.)

Mr. Bill, First Assistant, to Hage Hassan-ben-Ali Semey.

(After compliments.) *29th Safar*, 1325 (*April* 18, 1907).

ON the 12th March, 1907, your letter to the Consul was received, regarding the affair written to you by Sheikh Seger, Chief of Shargah, showing that he intends to withdraw the leasehold for oxide mines which are in the Island of Abu Musa. The Consul has requested me to reply that Sheikh Seger-ben-Khalet has sent a letter to the Consulate regarding this affair. The matter has been submitted to the Government of India, and before receiving instructions from the Government, the Consul does not see his way to interfere in this affair. This it was necessary to inform you.

(Signed) First Assistant Resident, Persian Gulf.

(Inclosure 16.)

Seger-ben-Khalet to Hassan-ben-Semey.

(After compliments.) *11th Safar*, 1325.

I HAVE received your letter, and noted contents. Regarding the complaint lodged with us by Isa-ben-Abdul Latif concerning the oxide in Abu Musa, you mention that your contract with the Germans was made by his and his father's knowledge, as per letter dated 21st Rebi-ul-Thani, 1324. In the same letter he also warns you against entering engagements resembling a lease or binding yourself in such way as to occasion a row; he further mentions that you should go a sure way, because his officials would not agree to it. The existing contract between you and the Germans, and the conditions which you have bound yourself to, are altogether contrary to the letter of Isa's father, which you mention. The reason that we are frightened of your work is that it is not remote that the mines go out of our sphere. We entered into this with you knowing that you are British subjects. We did not tell you to make contracts with strangers from foreign Powers without informing us, and to bind yourself. You have no right to make use of it and write on the head of the contract that you are the owners and possessors of the lease held in Abu Musa. To this we never agree, and you are not allowed to take oxide of iron from Abu Musa Island on the condition which you have made, unless the business is put on a footing of which we need not fear the consequences. This you should know.

(Signed) Sheikh SEGER-BEN-KHALET.

(Inclosure 17.)

Salem-bin-Sultan to Hamed-bin-Ali Semeyye.

In the name of . . . . God!

(After compliments.

THE man of my son Saker will arrive, and has the facts in his head. Be this known to you.

No date, signature, or seal.

Abdullah-bin-Haji Hassan states that, on questioning Sheikh Salem about this note, he replied he neither wrote it nor knew anything about it.

(Inclosure 18.)

Hassan-bin-Ali Semeyye to Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan.

In the name of . . . . God!

(After compliments.) *Lingah*, 27 *Rabia-awal*, 1325.

The reason of writing this is that in these days our man came from the island and informed us that a man on behalf of Sheikh Saker with a note bearing no seal, and pretending that it was from you, stopped the coolies from digging oxide from the mines, stating further that this prohibition is ordered by S. Saker. We do not understand the interference of S. Saker. Should this really be a fact, the action of S. Saker is contrary to law. He has no right to raise any objections and interfere with us. He should remember that he, as you know, has been one of the partners who sold his share to us, and for this reason we assert that he has no right to interfere with us, nor to stop the coolies from digging in the oxide mines. He must know and recognize that the stoppage of work means a great loss to us, as we even during the delay have to pay the coolies their daily wages. We conjecture that this proceeding of S. Saker is without your knowledge, and that you do not agree to these unjust interference and objections of his. As you know, all the contracts and correspondence from the beginning till this day, have been done by knowledge and approval of the British Political Agent, Abdul Latif, and all of you. It is astonishing that S. Saker goes beyond his limits and interferes in a matter which has been concluded with the consent and approval of the British Agent.

We have this moment written to Khan Behadur, Political Agent Abdul Latif, because from the beginning of our leasehold with you and others, have done all by his knowledge and approval, and because we consider him one of our partners, and we wish to know his final reply. Really we do not want all these troubles and disputes, but as you know, when necessity arises, one is obliged to stand up and defend his rights, which naturally entails a noisy dispute.

We are compelled to address ourselves to our Government, and claim whatsoever losses we sustain from him who interferes. This action of S. Saker is due to his jealousy of you and us, but we hope that so long as you are in existence, we have every confidence, and strangers have no rights over us. In these days my son Abdullah arrived from India, and intended to see you and pay his respects, and now awaits an opportunity.

We beg you to inform us of their object in this matter.

(Signed) HASSAN-BIN-ALI SEMEYYE AND Co.

(Inclosure 19.)

Lingah, 28 *Rabia-awal*, 1325.

A letter was written by Hussan-bin-Ali to Abdul Latif relating the incident occurred on the Island of Abu Musa, which has already been fully described in the letter 18 to Salam-bin-Sultan.

In addition, Haji Hassan informed Abdul Abdul Latif that his son Abdullah had made a contract for five years for a quantity of 400 tons to be delivered to India every year.

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(Inclosure 20.)

Abdul Latif-bin-Rahman to Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Semeyye.

(After compliments.) *Sharja*, 25 *Rabia-Sani*, 1325.

Your letter reached me, and I have noted your good health.

Regarding all what you state about the question of Sheikh Saker-bin-Khaled and his prohibition of your working oxide mines in Abu Musa, from what I gather from him he will not remove the prohibition unless he can make a clear arrangement with you in this matter.

He replies that the Island of Abu Musa is his property, and so long as he cannot make suitable arrangements he considers himself a loser. If he did not formerly interfere, it was due to the good understanding existing between you, but now he cannot leave the case alone as before, because a stranger has entered therein, and he is afraid that by and by the island will get out of his possession. This is his answer, and you must know that I cannot at present interfere in the matter, as I see the question has become complicated.

(Signed) ABDUL LATIF-BIN-ABDUL RAHMAN.

(Inclosure 21.)

Saker-bin-Khaled to Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Semeyye.

In the name of . . . . God!

(After compliments.) 25 *Shaban*, 1325.

Before this I informed you to stop working in the mines of the red oxide of iron in the Island of Abu Musa; we understand you do not listen; therefore we send you just now, on our behalf, a certain Isa-bin-Ahmed, who has a notice from us to you. We have instructed him to deliver the notice to you in presence of the British Consular Agent at Lingah against receipt. After this notice you have no claim on us. Be it known to you. I am ready at your disposal in case of need.

Dated the 25th Shaban, 1325.

(Inclosure 22.)

In the name of God!

In accordance with our contract dated the 18th Zilkada, 1315, corresponding to the 11th April, 1898, we agreed to lease the oxide of iron mines situated in the Island Abu Musa to Hage Hussan-ben-Ali Semey, Abdulla-ben-Hassan, and Isa-ben-Abdul Latif. The contract does not contain a clause authorizing you to give the whole output of oxide of iron to one stranger without our consent.

Because Hage Hassan-ben-Ali Semey made a contract without our consent with Robert Wönekhaus in Lingah on the 1st June, 1906, and gave him right of purchase of all this output of the mines in Abu Musa; we informed the said Hage Hassan-ben-Ali Semey in our letter dated the 9th Muharrem, 1325, corresponding to the 21st February, 1907, that this leasehold, dated the 18th Zilkada, 1315, had expired, and that he had no right to make use of the mines in Abu Musa in future.

We learn that, in spite of our prohibition, he still works the oxide mines in Abu Musa and enjoys the profits. On this account we hereby proclaim to the said Hage Hassan-ben-Ali Semey, and demand from him the immediate cession of work in the mines and removal of himself, his employed, and all his mining implements from the Island of Abu Musa within ten days from the date that this notice reaches him. Let this be known.

Written and dated the 25th Shaban, 1325.

(Signed) Sheikh SEGER-BEN-KHALET-BEN-SULTAN-EL-GASSEMI, *Chief of Shargah.*

(Received in Lingah 2 Ramazan, 1325.)

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[334] No. 2.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 4, 1908.)

(No. 797.)

Sir, *Constantinople, December 30, 1907.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 178 of the 29th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith paraphrase of a telegram from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo respecting the recent attack by an Arab on Mr. David Fraser near Harran.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 2.

Consul Longworth to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Aleppo, December 29, 1907.*

IN continuation of my telegram of yesterday, I beg to report that Mr. Fraser was travelling without zaptiehs at the time of the attack. The statements of the two Moslem muleteers and the Greek servant who accompanied him, according to the Turkish authorities, give the following account of the affair:—

On the 25th December they were met by a mounted Arab, who agreed to lead them to Ibrahim Pasha, but, failing in his attempt to extort payment, the Arab shot Mr. Fraser at one of the halts, wounding him in the left hand and right arm, and robbed him of his effects and £T. 17 in cash.

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[431] No. 3.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 4.)

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 4, 1908.*

ABU MUSA.

Major Cox telegraphed yesterday as follows:

"Last week a meeting was held in Bushire of the five European representatives in the Gulf of Messrs. Wönckhaus. On 1st January Mr. Brown, who is in charge at present, proceeded by the German steamer 'Sicilia' to Bussorah.

"I have a report from a local informant to the effect that this ship will proceed empty direct to Abu Musa Island from Bussorah, in order to remove, in spite of Sheikh's opposition, the accumulated oxide.

"This report I am not inclined to credit, but I will have movements of ship reported to me; in the event of contingency appearing probable, do you see any objection, when 'Sicilia' calls, to a gunboat happening to be in the neighbourhood of Abu Musa? If Wönckhaus, in spite of Sheikh's opposition and without our concurrence, succeeded in shipping the oxide, result would be most damaging to our prestige on the Trucial Coast. As far as I can see, however, there is no reason why he should not be allowed to remove the already accumulated oxide, so long as the German Government specifically accept such a proceeding as a friendly arrangement by means of which all Wönckhaus' claims under his questionable contract with Hassan Sanaiyeh are disposed of. (Addressed to Viceroy; repeated to Legation.)"

I am writing to German Chargé d'Affaires to warn him that execution of intentions attributed to German firm might result in serious complications.

Full information in regard to details of Wönckhaus' claim has, I presume, been supplied to you by India Office.

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[468] No. 4*.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6, 1908.)

(No. 560.)

Sir, *Berlin, December 27, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I called upon Herr von Schön this morning, and his Excellency informed me that he had sent some documents about the Abu Musa incident to Count Metternich for communication to you. He did not in the least wish to treat this as a political question, and it was being dealt with in the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office, but the papers had taken it up, and it was perhaps unfortunate that a British gun-boat should have taken an active part in a commercial dispute. I replied that as the German Ambassador in London was going to talk to you on the subject I did not propose to discuss it with him, but I had no doubt that you would be glad to hear that the German Government were not disposed to attach political importance to it. Herr von Schön went on to say that Germany had no political interests in Persia, and gave me to understand that the activity of the German Chargé d'Affaires had been by no means agreeable to him, and it would probably be necessary before long to appoint a new German Minister to Tehran. I said that I had heard that Baron von Richthofen had displayed undesirable activity, not only during the present crisis but also when he had acted as Chargé d'Affaires on a previous occasion. Herr von Schön interrupted me by saying that there was another foreign Representative at Tehran who seemed to wish to give himself undue importance, and he could not understand why the French Minister should have put forward a claim to be present with the English and Russian Representatives at the ceremony of the Shah's taking the oath to the Constitution to the exclusion of the other foreign Representatives. It was only natural, in consequence of the special position which England and Russia occupied in Persia, that their Representatives should be present at the ceremony, but if the French Minister were there, there could be no reason for the other diplomatists to be kept away. I said that this was the first I had heard of such a claim being put forward by the French Minister. I knew that he had warmly supported his English and Russian colleagues, and I thought I should have heard if he had sought to obtain an exceptional position for himself. Herr von Schön, however, seemed certain of his facts.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

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[615] No. 4.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 7.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 5, 1908.*

QUESTION of Abu Musa in Persian Gulf.

I have received your telegram No. 4 of yesterday.

You should tell Sheikh that all oxide accumulated by Wönckhaus should certainly be allowed to be shipped by the latter without in any case any conditions being imposed.

You should exercise greatest caution at present, as we have not yet examined the case sent us by the German Government, and the case may be materially altered by the new facts which are set forth in it.

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[488] No. 5.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6, 1908.)

(No. 802.)
Sir, *Pera, December 31, 1907.*

IN my despatch No. 707 of the 20th ultimo I reported that the Ottoman Government had begun to take energetic steps to repress the rebellious behaviour of the Dersim Kurds. I now have the honour to transmit a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum giving an account of the operations of a Turkish punitive expedition in the Dersim district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 5.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 81.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, December 12, 1907.*

WITH reference to Mr. Wilkie Young's despatch to your Excellency, No. 63 of the 16th October last, transmitting a summary of a despatch from Mr. Mighirditchian, Dragoman of His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Diarbekir, on the subject of the plundering of certain Christian villages of the Kharput Vilayet by the Kurds of the Dersim, and to your Excellency's telegram of the 21st ultimo respecting the measures about to be taken against the latter, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that news has reached me to the effect that a combat has recently taken place between these Kurds and the troops sent against them from Khozat (Kharput) and Erzindjan. It is further reported that although the losses sustained by the Kurds were severe, and that several of their chiefs were captured, the soldiers were unable to follow up their success, owing to the fact that the mountains in which the former took refuge had been rendered inaccessible by the recent heavy fall of snow.

I should add that I have been informed by Lieutenant-General Ahmed Pasha, the Commandant of the Erzeroum garrison, that the troops engaged in the above operations consisted of four battalions, two from Khozat and two from Erzindjan, advancing from different points so as to move effectually surround the Kurds. His Excellency confirmed in the main the details given above as to the losses sustained by the latter, who, he stated, belonged chiefly to the Kotchoglou tribe, dwelling in or about the district of the Dersim.

As your Excellency is aware, these Kurds are a standing menace to their more peaceable neighbours, whether Mussulman or Christian, and it is greatly to be desired that the Imperial Government should once for all take in hand the question of permanently reducing them to order, as the past history of the Dersim has repeatedly shown that the deterrent effect on the Kurds of that district of punitive expeditions such as the one above referred to is temporary only, their marauding proclivities breaking out again at the first favourable opportunity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

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[489] No. 6.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6, 1908.)

(No. 803.)

Sir, *Pera, December 31, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 17th instant, forwarding a letter from Miss Cole, the Honorary Treasurer of the Women's Armenian Relief Fund, on the subject of the distress prevailing in the Vilayets of Van and Bitlis, and suggesting that permission might be obtained for the emigration of Armenians from Van.

Miss Cole's remarks regarding the scarcity of wheat are, as you are aware, confirmed by the reports from His Majesty's Vice-Consuls in the two vilayets, and I have lost no opportunity of drawing the attention of the Ottoman Government and of the charitable Societies in Constantinople interested in Armenia to the distress prevailing.

As regards emigration, Miss Cole is under a false impression if she thinks that a general permission has been granted for the emigration of Armenians from Bitlis. No such general permission exists or would, in my opinion, ever be granted by the Sultan, except under coercion. It is true that we have heard of small quantities of Armenians being permitted to leave Bitlis for Russia in search of work, and it is possible that, if Russia is willing to admit them, which is certainly not the case at present, the Russian Vice-Consul at Van could arrange locally for the departure of similar small lots from Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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[614] No. 7.

Extract from the "Times" of January 6, 1908.

GERMAN RAILWAYS IN ASIA MINOR.

ON the 23rd instant a contract was signed by the representatives of the Government and of the Anatolian Railway Company, by which the latter is authorized to double its share capital, at present amounting to 67,500,000 fr. (2,700,000*l.*) nominal. This important increase has been decided on as the simplest method of providing the capital necessary for certain costly undertakings upon which the Company is shortly to embark. Of the existing share capital only 60 per cent. has been paid up, and the expediency of calling in the outstanding balance was considered, but the idea was abandoned as being liable to prejudice holders by forcing many who could not meet the call to part with their shares. At a meeting of the Board of the Anatolian Railway and Deutsche Bank on Saturday last it was decided that the Deutsche Bank should take over all the newly created stock and subscribe immediately only 10 per cent., undertaking to meet further calls gradually, according to the needs of the Railway Company. These needs thus provided for are—

First, the cost of doubling the line from Haidar-pasha to Pendik, a distance of about 50 kilom.;

Secondly, the capital required for the Koniah irrigation works; and

Thirdly, the cost of improving and strengthening the Anatolian line to permit the running of an express service in connection with the Bagdad Railway.

The first of these undertakings will entail an expense of about 3,000,000 fr. (120,000*l.*), on which the Government have already guaranteed 5 per cent. interest, to be derived from the excess receipts of the suburban line over the average receipts of the last ten years. The second scheme will consume 20,000,000 fr. (800,000*l.*), to which another 2,000,000 fr. (80,000*l.*) must be reckoned as interest until completion of the work. The special guarantees for this outlay have already been described; the Government guarantees a minimum of 5 per cent. In the third matter the Company is bound by the Bagdad Railway Convention to spend a minimum of 8,000,000 fr. (320,000*l.*) on the repair and improvement of the Haidar-pasha–Koniah and Eskishehr–

Angora lines, to permit the running of express trains; a sum of 350,000 fr. (14,000*l.*) from the surplus of tithes affected to the kilometric guarantees of the line will be paid to meet the interest and sinking fund on the sum of the disbursements under this head. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the Government undertakes to provide an equal sum of 350,000 fr. to meet the special loss on the express service, which, however, only begins when the line has reached Aleppo. Finally, the Company anticipates spending some money on the renewal of a part of its rolling-stock and the acquisition of sundry other materials, which it has hitherto been unwilling or unable to afford. Although the Government guarantees only 5 per cent. on two of these undertakings, the Company is persuaded that the improved returns will enable it to maintain a dividend of 5 per cent. on shares.

Constantinople, December 30, 1907.

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[603] No. 8.

The Marquis di San Giuliano to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(Translation.)

Your Excellency, *Italian Embassy, January 2, 1908.*

IN my note of the 7th ultimo I had the honour to notify to your Excellency the intention of my Government to send an Agent to Muscat, whose duty would be to organize a service of information respecting the arms traffic which takes place between that Sultanate and the Somali Coast.

I am now instructed by my Government to make it clear that it is their intention to found at Muscat a regular official Consular Agency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. DI SAN GIULIANO.

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[618] No. 9.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 6, 1908.*

ABU MUSA.

In reply to a telegram asking for information, I have received following from Major Cox, dated the 3rd January :—

At Brown's express bidding, Lingah concessionnaire, in the beginning, carefully kept secret text of German contract and suppressed the fact, in correspondence with his friends, that it conferred a monopoly.

Third concessionnaire may quite possibly have agreed to mere sale to Wönckhaus and some oxide, the purport of the contract having thus been misrepresented to him; but it is evident from his letter of the 20th February (inclosure 1 in my despatch to Government of India of the 28th February, 1907) that as soon as he learnt precise text of document he at once repudiated it.

Hassan and his co-partner are both British subjects under my jurisdiction, and if former is in possession of a letter such as that suggested, and if it has any value, I fail to see why he does not sue latter on it in Residency Court.

I submit that this question, in any case, cannot be said to concern the Germans, but is one between the partners themselves. The German complaint lies against the Sheikh of Shargah's action; that action is based on the fact that the contract in question conferred a monopoly to which the Sheikh altogether objected, and which the concessionnaires, whether two or three, had no power to give, and not on the question whether the third partner did or did not agree to the German contract.

Following are the facts reported in regard to the alleged firing on Mr. Brown :—

On the 22nd October, the son and miners of the Lingah concessionnaire having been evicted and sent to Lingah, the Sheikh of Shargah left a strong guard on the island with orders that no one was to be allowed to land at the mines. In the meantime Brown proceed to Abu Musa Island in a native boat, on which he had hoisted the German flag, and anchored off the oxide mines; he had previously sent a letter to the Sheikh, in which he threatened to send over his own employés "to protect our property," and it is stated that, before leaving, he announced to persons in Lingah his intention

of planting the German flag on the oxide mines. He persisted in attempting to land, in spite of the repeated warning shouted to him by the Sheikh's guard that he would not be allowed to do so, and the guard consequently fired two shots in the air to deter him as he neared the shore. Brown expostulated at this, and assured guard that all he wanted was to see how matters stood. Two of his men were thereupon allowed to land, and were escorted back to the boat when they had seen all they wished; Brown then returned to Lingah in his boat.

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[636] No. 10.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 7.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 3rd instant, relative to the discourtesy of Turkish officials at Katif.

India Office, January 6, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 10.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, January 3*, 1908.

KATIF. Please refer to your telegram of the 2nd December, 1907.

In a despatch dated the 17th December, 1907, His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to inform Porte that, until a formal apology is made by the offending officials to the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing," the incident will not be regarded as closed.

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[695] No. 11.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 7.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 6th instant, relative to the Abu Musa red oxide Concession.

India Office, January 7, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January 6*, 1908.

ABU MUSA. Following is purport of telegram from Resident, Bushire, dated 3rd January:—

"I have received following from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran, dated 31st December:—

"'My telegram No. 136. It is asserted by the German Chargé d'Affaires that Mr. Brown, who is a German subject, was fired on. I told him that no confirmation of this report had reached me. He further declared that Esa bin Abdul Latif, the third partner, had written a private letter to Hassan Sammiyeh agreeing to Wönckhaus' contract. I replied that Esa bin Abdul had, on the contrary, always protested against the contract. I shall be glad to know whether there is the slightest foundation for either of the German Chargé d'Affaires' statements.'"

Resident at Bushire also repeats following telegram, dated 3rd instant, which he has addressed to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran, in reply to above:—

"Lingah concessionnaire, at commencement, carefully kept secret the text of the German contract, at Brown's express bidding, and suppressed the fact that the monopoly had been conferred in the contract when writing to his friends. It seems quite possible that the third concessionnaire may have assented to the mere sale to Wönekhaus of some of the oxide, since the purport of the document had been thus misrepresented to him, but, so soon as the precise text of the contract became known to him, he repudiated it without delay (see letter from him, dated 20th February, forwarded to Government of India with my letter of the 28th February, 1907).

"Why does not Hassan, if he has such a letter as that suggested, and it is of any value, sue his co-partner in the Residency Court? Both are British subjects, and under my jurisdiction. I submit that in any case this question is one between the partners themselves, and cannot be held to concern the Germans. The Germans' complaint is against the Sheikh of Shargah's action, which is based on the fact that the contract in question conferred a monopoly which the concessionnaires, whether two or three in number, had no power to give, and to which the Sheikh altogether objected, and involves no question as to whether the third partner did or did not agree to the German contract.

"The following are the facts reported as regards the alleged firing on Mr. Brown:—

"Son of the Lingah concessionnaire, and miners employed by him, were evicted from mines on 11th September. They were dispatched to Lingah on 22nd October, and a strong guard, whose orders were not to allow any one to land at the mines, was then left on the island by the Sheikh of Shargah. Meanwhile, Mr. Brown proceeded to the island in a native boat flying the German flag, and anchored off the oxide mines. He had, before sailing, sent a letter to the Sheikh in which he threatened to send over his own employés 'to protect our property.' It is also stated that before leaving Lingah he informed persons at that place that his intention was to plant the German flag on the oxide mines. Repeated warning was shouted by Sheikh's guard to Mr. Brown, when off the island, that he would not be allowed to land. In spite of these warnings he attempted to do so, and, therefore, as he neared the shore, with a view to deterring him, the guard fired two shots. He expostulated at this, and assured the guard that he only wanted to see how matters stood. Two of his men were then allowed to go ashore, and see all they wished, by the guard. Mr. Brown sailed for Lingah after his two men had been escorted back to the boat by the Sheikh's guard."

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[177] No. 12.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

(No. 6.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 7*, 1908.

THE Councillor of the German Embassy called at the Foreign Office on the 31st ultimo and was received by Mr. Mallet in my absence. He left a note, of which a copy is inclosed,* containing the views of his Government on the subject of Herr Wonckhaus' claim to a Red Oxide Concession at Abu Musa, and asked that, pending a decision of the case, the concessionnaires might be allowed to continue working the mine.

Mr. Mallet said that Herr Wonckhaus had been permitted by the Sheikh to ship all the accumulated oxide, but that he feared it would be impossible for him to allow the concessionnaires of the mines to recommence mining operations. He would, however, report the suggestion to me, and the Government of India would be consulted.

Mr. Mallet added that, as far as the question had been examined in this Department, it appeared that Herr Wonckhaus' claim would lie against Hassan Sammiyeh, the British Indian subject who concluded the agreement with him, but that the German representation would be most carefully considered, and a reply sent to him as soon as possible.

Herr von Stumm said that in the view of the German Government the question

* No. 7.

was of a commercial and not of a political nature, and Mr. Mallet said that I looked upon it in the same light.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

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[785] No. 13.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 8.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 7th instant, relative to the Abu Musa red oxide Concession.

India Office, January 8, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January 7, 1908.*

PLEASE refer to my telegram of yesterday's date regarding Abu Musa.

We concur in opinion expressed by Resident in Gulf, that aggrieved party's proper course would be to institute a suit in the Residency Court, or at any rate to refer the matter to the Resident. It is well known both to concessionnaires, who are naturalized British subjects, and to Herr Wönckhaus, that the Sheikh is under Resident's political jurisdiction. Herr Wönckhaus himself invoked Resident's assistance in a somewhat similar case in Bahrein in 1905. Some ulterior motive from outside is apparently indicated by departure in this instance from ordinary procedure and previous precedent on part of Herr Wönckhaus.

We had hoped that discussion of the case would be carried on in London (see our telegram of the 17th November to His Majesty's Minister, Tehran), since we anticipated that otherwise a revival of Persian claims to the island might be instigated by German Minister. Mr. Marling's telegram to the Foreign Office, dated the 6th January, shows that our expectation as to this has now been fulfilled, and it seems particularly desirable, in the circumstances, that further discussion of the case at Tehran should if possible, be stopped. If the incident is likely to be further protracted, we would venture to recommend that Mr. Marling should inform the German Minister that, Trucial Chiefs being under the jurisdiction of the Resident, complaints as to their proceedings should, at any rate in the first instance, be preferred to the Resident. Attempt by Germany to press for Persian interference at this stage should be rendered difficult by the fact that Messrs. Wönckhaus' agent has endeavoured to deal direct with the Sheikh in the matter, and has throughout made no reference to the Persian Government.

We attach great importance to the maintenance of the Resident's jurisdiction and authority over Trucial Chiefs, in regard to whom he is not under the Minister at Tehran. Facts of the case are well known at Bushire. Mr. Brown has assisted the German Consul here.

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[794] No. 14.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 8.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 8th instant, relative to the Abu Musa red oxide Concession.

India Office, January 8, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January 8, 1908.*

ABU MUSA.

Resident at Bushire has been instructed in accordance with the terms of your telegram of the 6th instant. As will be seen from my telegram of the 29th October, 1907, we had already authorized him to arrange for the removal of accumulated oxide. Presence of gun-boat during removal of oxide would prevent possibility of friction with Sheikh's men, or of Germans attempting to make a permanent lodgment on the island on pretext of removing the accumulated ore. May we inform Resident, with reference to his telegram of the 3rd instant, that there is no objection to gun-boat revisiting island for this purpose?

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[78] No. 15.

Foreign Office to India Office.

(Confidential.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 8, 1908.*

WITH reference to my letter of the 28th ultimo, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, the accompanying copy of a note from the German Chargé d'Affaires, respecting the situation which has arisen in connection with the export of red oxide from the island of Abu Musa.

In forwarding this document, I am to draw your particular attention to the statement that the mines in question were the property of the ruling Sheikh's uncle, Salem-bin-Sultan, and that they were leased by him in his own right and not as representing the Chief of Shargah during his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1898. This contention does not appear to harmonize with the account contained in the British Resident's letter of the 29th November, 1905.

The question of ownership may not be easy to determine, but if it could be established that the annual rent was paid to the ruling Sheikh and not to his uncle, such a conclusion would go far to disprove the allegations contained in the German case.

In this connection I am to recall to you the opinion expressed in 1903 by Colonel Kemball, the late Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the effect that the island of Abu Musa undoubtedly belonged to the Juwasmi Sheikh of Shargah. He added that in summer the sole inhabitants of the island were three men whose duty was to tend the date trees belonging to the uncle of the Sheikh of Shargah. While, therefore, the ruling Sheikh was admittedly the territorial owner, his uncle possessed landed property on the island, which not improbably included the red oxide mines.

The purchase in October 1907—long after the Sheikh had terminated the Concession granted in 1898—of one share by Messrs. Wönckhaus would appear to establish that Mr. Brown and his followers set sail from Lingah for Abu Musa on the 22nd October, not for the purpose of protecting the oxide accumulated on the shore, but in order forcibly to exercise Messrs. Wönckhaus' newly-acquired rights as co-owners in the original Concession. It is further to be remarked that the sale to Mr. Brown by Hassan Sanniyeh is dated the very day on which the formal notice from the Sheikh of Shargah, directing him to cease work on the island, was served.

Sir E. Grey considers that it would be expedient to ascertain the precise wording of inclosures 4a and 4c in the note from the German Chargé d'Affaires. The former bears the impress of an endorsement rather than of a substantive document.

The substance of the German complaint is contained in paragraphs 5 and 6 on page 3, viz., that the Sheikh of Shargah's action concerns Messrs. Wönckhaus as partners in the Concession, and that their claim lies against the Sheikh as distinct from the other partners in the Concession; while in substance it is claimed that Messrs. Wönckhaus should now be allowed to work the mines themselves. Any such claim, if admitted, might be held to give the Germans virtual occupation of the island, a consummation which, in the opinion of Sir E. Grey, is to be avoided.

I am to suggest, for the consideration of Mr. Secretary Morley, that it might be advisable to ascertain the views of the Government of India upon the note from the

German Chargé d'Affaires; and, in view of the urgency of the question, I am to express the hope that this may be done by telegraph.

In the meanwhile Sir E. Grey proposes to inform Herr von Stumm that His Majesty's Government are examining the statements contained in the German case, and that, pending this examination, they cannot agree to the claim of Messrs. Wonckhaus to work the mines, since the original Concession was cancelled before a specific share was transferred to this firm. Sir E. Grey further proposes to add that Messrs. Wonckhaus will be allowed to remove all the red oxide which has already been mined and is now ready for shipment; and, in this connection, I am to suggest, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for India, that a British Representative should proceed to Abu Musa forthwith to be present during the operations, in order to ascertain the precise amount of oxide ready for shipment, since this should be calculated as a set-off against any possible claim by Messrs. Wonckhaus for loss under the contract of June 1906.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

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[895] No. 16.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 10.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 9, 1908.*

I REPEATED your telegram No. 7 of the 5th instant, respecting Abu Musa incident, to Bushire, and have received following in reply:—

"In view of fact that neither Wönckhaus nor German Consul has ever made any representations to this Residency, I hope that more salient facts adduced in German case may be sent to Bushire."

I am disposed to think that Major Cox has a very complete answer, judging from the verbal sketch of the case given me by German Chargé d'Affaires.

Baron von Richthofen informed me he had told his Consul in November that Sheikh of Shargah was under British protection; it would appear, however, that Consul ignores Protectorate deliberately.

[1108] No. 17.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

(No. 9.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 9, 1908.*

I TOLD the German Ambassador to-day that since I had last seen him a difficulty had arisen with regard to the contract of Messrs. Wönckhaus respecting red oxide on the Island of Abu Musa.

I was very much obliged to the German Government for having put the case so fully before us. Their statement differed in some important particulars from the information which I had so far received. Their statement had now been handed to the India Office to be sent out by mail, in order that it might be carefully examined and that I might be supplied with the fullest possible information. The Indian Government had a Resident at Bushire, from whom we could get full information.

Count Metternich remarked that he thought a British Consul had been on the gun-boat which visited Abu Musa.

I said this very probably was the case. We had a Treaty with the Sheikh dating back to a very long time ago, but finally confirmed and ratified in 1892, by which the Sheikh was under our protection and had agreed not to enter into any Agreement or correspondence with any other Power.

I must wait for further information on the points submitted by the German Government. But I might say at once that although, as the Mining Concession had been cancelled some time ago, no fresh oxide could be mined pending a further decision, yet it seemed clear that Messrs. Wönckhaus were entitled to the red oxide which had actually been mined already, which was waiting to be taken away, and which might be regarded as already sold to them. A complaint had been made that when their agent, Mr. Brown, visited Abu Musa the Sheikh's officers had fired upon him; and

we were sending instructions to the Indian Government in order that they might do whatever was necessary to insure that, if Messrs. Wönckhaus visited the island for the purpose of taking away the oxide which was waiting there for removal, there should be no further trouble of the kind.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

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[991] No. 18.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 10.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 9th instant, relative to the situation at Abu Musa.

A copy will be sent to the Director of Military Operations, and to the Director of Naval Intelligence.

India Office, January 10, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 18.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January 9, 1908.*

PLEASE see my telegram of yesterday as to Abu Musa affairs.

Sheikh's failure to maintain guards effectively on the island is reported by Resident, Bushire, who attributes this to apathy and disinclination to incur expense, and suggests either that Esa-bin-Abdul Latif, the third concessionnaire, who is incensed at the conduct of his co-partner, should be subsidized by us with a view to maintenance of guard, or that we should either buy or lease Abu Musa from the Sheikh by secret document. Esa-bin-Abdul Latif would undertake to live on the island, with guard, and represent the Sheikh's interests if Sheikh's consent were obtained. Funds for the guard might be supplied by us privately.

We hesitate to suggest any action at the present moment which might have the effect of raising doubts as to the correct nature of our proceedings. It seems preferable, though some use might, perhaps, be made of Abdul Latif, the partner not concerned in the grant of the Wönckhaus monopoly, to leave things as they are till matters settle down, measures, however, being taken by sending gun-boat to secure that neither Persian Government, nor Wönckhaus, nor concessionnaires take forcible possession of the island. We adhere to our opinion that arrangements should be made to sell the ore free, and without special concession or monopoly to any one, when the incident is closed. Later on it might be desirable that we should place a lighthouse on Abu Musa. This would probably afford sufficient protection to our interests and those of the Sheikh, and reasons for such a step on our part will be found in the position of the island, and the recent stranding thereon of the British India Steam Navigation Company's steam-ship "Balinda."

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[78] No. 19.

Sir Edward Grey to Herr von Stumm.

SIR E. GREY has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the note from the German Chargé d'Affaires, dated the 31st December, 1907, on the subject of the contract between Messrs. Wönckhaus and a native British subject for the purchase of red oxide from the island of Abu Musa.

His Majesty's Government fully appreciate the courtesy of the German Government in communicating without reserve the documents in their possession, and the examination of the German case is being actively pursued.

The facts set out in these papers differ materially from those which had been reported to Sir E. Grey, and it will be necessary for His Majesty's Government to apply to the parties concerned for further information.

Sir E. Grey observes that Messrs. Wonckhaus claim that they are now partners in the Concession originally granted in 1898, but inasmuch as this Concession had been cancelled by the Sheikh of Shargah some months before any share therein was transferred to Messrs. Wonckhaus, he cannot admit that they are entitled to assume any such position.

At the present juncture His Majesty's Government do not think that it would be desirable that the Sheikh of Shargah should permit the Company to resume work at the mines—any attempt to do so might not improbably result in further confusion.

His Majesty's Government, however, see no objection to Robert Wonckhaus removing the red oxide, which has already been mined and is now ready for shipment from the island. If this proposal as to the removal of the red oxide in question meets with the concurrence of the German Government, His Majesty's Government would advise the Sheikh accordingly, and would arrange for the Indian Government to take whatever step seemed desirable to insure that all proper facilities are placed at the disposal of Mr. Wonckhaus for the removal of the oxide, and to prevent any local friction or conflict between Mr. Wonckhaus and the men of the Sheikh of Shargah.

Foreign Office, January 10, 1908.

[39850] No. 20.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 6.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 10, 1908.

THE reports which have recently been received from His Majesty's Consular officers in Armenia are of so serious a character as to occasion grave anxiety respecting the future course of events in that region.

For convenience of reference I propose to summarize the salient facts which have been reported in your Excellency's despatches received during the past year, taking them under the headings of the provinces to which they severally relate.

The Bitlis and Moush Districts.

The reports from the officer in charge of His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Bitlis, which were inclosed in your Excellency's despatches No. 355 of the 13th June and No. 411 of the 10th July, described the events which resulted in the serious rising of the Mussulman population of that town on the 22nd June. The earlier accounts tend to show that the Armenian population of Bitlis and the Plain of Moush were suffering under conditions which had become increasingly harassing; as a result of the irresponsible conduct of the tax-gatherers, the collection of taxes was a permanent scourge; all complaints converged on the same point, that the fiscal authorities treated the Armenian population in a manner difficult adequately to describe; that when the villagers were unable to meet their obligations they were frequently beaten; that in the absence of men the women were subjected to the most cruel indignities at once heinous and revolting. In these circumstances hundreds of villagers were seeking permission to emigrate to Russia, upwards of 90,000 names being registered at the Russian Consulate with this design.

Eventually, owing to the open dishonesty and egregious incompetence of the Vali of Bitlis, the state of affairs became so intolerable that the popular impatience found forcible expression in the Mussulman riot, to which reference has already been made.

The carelessness of the Vali in presence of the general misery of both Mussulmans and Armenians; the high price of grain, which was artificially brought about and afterwards maintained by his Excellency from interested motives; the emigration of Mussulmans and Armenians by hundreds, while official evidence was fabricated to show that the desire to emigrate did not really exist; the postponement of the reconstruction (by means of an Imperial grant expressly made for this purpose) of houses damaged during the late earthquake, and the forcible demolition of the dwellings of the poor for purposes of municipal embellishment—all this and much more of a similar character was indicated as the cause of the disturbance and of the demand for the Vali's dismissal.

That the Ottoman Government should have bowed to the popular demand is in itself an eloquent testimony to the gravity of the situation.

On the 30th June Captain Dickson, His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, arrived at Bitlis on a mission of inquiry. The Russian Government had suggested that the British, Russian, and French Consuls should study the situation at Bitlis, Erzeroum, and Van, as the state of affairs in the provinces bordering on the Caucasus was such as to give rise to anxiety; but your Excellency was convinced (see your telegram No. 86 of the 7th July) that it would be unwise for a formal Conference to take place between the Consuls of the three Powers in the vilayets in question, on the ground that such action might engender hopes destined to disappointment.

In July Tahir Pasha arrived at Bitlis. At first he was intrusted with an investigation into the causes of the attack upon the late Vali, but subsequently, as reported in your despatch No. 467 of the 31st July, he was appointed Vali of Bitlis.

On the 20th July your Excellency was able to report that, in consequence of your representations and those of your Russian colleague, the Grand Vizier had telegraphed to Tahir Pasha, instructing him to pay special attention to the complaints of the British and Russian Consuls, and specially to the prevention of Moslem immigrants from settling in Christian villages and ousting Christian villagers, and the necessity of collecting only the legal taxes, giving proper printed receipts, and refraining from the seizure of articles of prime necessity.

These proposals were part of a larger scheme of reforms elaborated by Captain Dickson, and that officer strongly urged the Vali to carry them into effect.

As reported in your despatch No. 467 of the 31st July, Tahir Pasha agreed with Captain Dickson as to the pitiable condition of the Christians in the Vilayet of Bitlis, and the abuses and corruption which had existed under the late régime. His Excellency further declared his gratitude for the assistance afforded him by the British and Russian Consuls in the inquiry upon which he was engaged, expressed himself astounded at the state of affairs, and concluded by recording his conviction that the proposals which had been made were perfectly just and necessary for the welfare of the vilayet.

On the 4th August Captain Dickson reported his return to Van, and Mr. Vice-Consul Heard, who was temporarily at Kharput, was instructed to proceed by way of Moush to Bitlis. He arrived at Moush on the 31st July, and met the Russian Consul, who had come from Bitlis.

A vivid description of the oppression of the Christian population and the deplorable state of things in the Moush district is disclosed in the able and carefully prepared Report drawn up by Mr. Heard, and inclosed in your despatch No. 553 of the 10th September.

He declares the general condition of the Moush population to be one of complete misery and subjection, with no hope of alleviation from their oppression. Overburdened by excessive taxation, in debt to the "seleftars," obliged to pay whatever they may be asked for fear of being denounced as revolutionaries, and seeing their land unlawfully seized by Beys and Agas, they are bound to become the bondslaves of their oppressors or leave their homes and go elsewhere.

On receipt of this Report, your Excellency caused the leading points to be placed before the Grand Vizier.

These, and the consequent action of his Highness, are set forth in your despatch No. 587 of the 18th September:—

"1. To mitigate and gradually abolish the iniquitous and ruinous system of Selemdelik.

"2. To increase the facilities for borrowing from the Agricultural Bank.

"3. The deportation of notorious Kurdish oppressors of the Armenian population in the Moush district.

"4. To relieve the congestion in the Moush prison, the sanitary state of which was deplorable in the extreme, while many of the prisoners had been languishing there for long periods without any semblance of trial.

"5. Not to exact from villagers arrears of taxes for absentees.

"6. To stop the intrigues of the big tithe-farmers of Bitlis, who were upsetting in the Akhlat district the system recently sanctioned of levying the tithes on the basis of a five years' average.

"His Highness sent for the Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior, and ordered telegraphic instructions to be sent to Moush and Bitlis in the sense of Nos. 1 and 2. As regards No. 3, he had not yet obtained the needful Imperial sanction (although I learn that some of the Kurds have, as I have already reported, been already removed).

"4. His Highness ordered telegraphic instructions to be sent at once to relieve the congestion by hiring a Khan in the town of Moush, and for the Bitlis Procureur to proceed at once to Moush and expedite with all possible despatch pending judicial cases.

"5. His Highness had a telegram sent reminding the authorities of an Imperial Irade, according to which a village is not to be held responsible for the arrears of taxes of absentee villagers without an attempt being made to ascertain the whereabouts of the latter, that is, whether they are dead, have left the district or country without permission, or are hiding, or out with revolutionary bands.

"6. His Highness said the matter was somewhat complicated and difficult, but that he was sending instructions that, in view of bad crops and prevailing distress, the extortionate methods of the tithe-farmers should not be countenanced or encouraged by the local authorities, who were to see that the tithes were collected without undue harshness or rigour."

Your Excellency has not yet reported to what extent practical effect has been given to the injunctions of the Grand Vizier; but it is particularly unfortunate that the departure of Tahir Pasha should have been necessitated at such a moment, since the Defterdar who at first succeeded to his office possessed neither the energy nor the prestige necessary to keep order or introduce reform. A more satisfactory account has, however, been received of the Acting Vali who has since taken the Defterdar's place.

I reserve such further comments as may suggest themselves in regard to the desirability and nature of adequate reforms for the concluding paragraphs of this despatch. It appears advantageous, before making definite proposals for improvement, to pass in review the more prominent features of the Reports which have been received concerning other provinces of Armenia.

Vilayet of Van.

Writing at the end of April, His Majesty's Vice-Consul reported that the Vali was collecting taxes with great severity and in a manner quite illegal, as the arrears for several years were collected at once; and in many cases oxen for ploughing, seed, corn, beds, cooking utensils, &c., had been sold, and in some cases fruit-trees cut down and disposed of.

Your Excellency duly made representations to the Grand Vizier, and on the 30th May you were in a position to telegraph to me that, as a result of your efforts, the condition of affairs and the Vali's conduct had greatly improved.

At the beginning of August Captain Dickson returned to Van from Bitlis, and, in his Report inclosed in your despatch No. 520 of the 20th August, stated that Ali Bey, the Vali, had again made himself unpopular by his harsh action in collecting arrears of taxes; this, principally affecting the Armenians, had caused an extraordinary increase of activity on the part of the revolutionary organizations and a sort of alliance between them and the Young Turk party. During the time of Tahir Pasha, the revolutionary movement in Van was passive, while Ali Bey was entirely to blame for the existing state of affairs. Moreover, first, his action in tax-collecting; then his despotic independence of the other officials; and, finally, his open profligacy, had served to offend and alienate the Moslems.

Various disturbances of a more or less serious nature are reported to have taken place in the town and Vilayet of Van since the beginning of the year; and it is evident, from Captain Dickson's despatches, that the Vali was not fully aware of the effects of his short-sighted policy of extortion pursued earlier in the year, which, from the personal observations of His Majesty's Vice-Consul in the course of his journeys, has undoubtedly resulted in a considerable diminution of the taxable capacity of the population, as also of the extent of land under cultivation.

The Vali alleged that he must have money, but that the balance of receipts and expenditure showed an annual deficit of 60,000*l.* To make matters worse, he has now been ordered to mobilize troops for Persia.

In these circumstances it was satisfactory to learn, as announced in your despatch No. 575, of the 14th September, that Reshid Pasha, who had created an excellent impression by his energy in municipal reform while Mutessarif of the Dardanelles, had been appointed to the post of Vali of Van.

The Vilayet of Kharput.

With regard to the Vilayet of Kharput, the information which has been received is relatively meagre. It appears from your despatch No. 482 of the 5th August that the drastic measures which for a certain period had been enforced against the Armenians were subsequently modified, while Khalid Bey, the Vali, evidently made a determined attempt to suppress the notorious condition of bribery which permeated the official classes.

A report furnished by the United States' Consul at this place shows that the general feeling of unrest and insecurity which pervaded the whole district had become more marked during the month of August. This officer was able to exert a beneficial influence in preventing the deportation of suspects who were really innocent. Unfortunately, the Vali was reputed to be hampered in every move he made by the machinations of his antagonists and the enmity of his subordinates.

The Vilayet of Erzeroum.

In February of the present year, His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum reported that, although matters had outwardly become quieter since the serious disturbances which had taken place in the preceding October, there was no real improvement in the situation, while no better proof could be afforded of the intensity of the desire for a change in the existing methods of administration by which all classes were permeated, than the evidence that what was originally a simple outburst of popular feeling against the general mismanagement of affairs, had gradually taken the shape of a definite organization for purposes of opposition to the Government, and composed of representatives taken from each of the Mussulman wards of the city.

Although the relations between the Mussulmans and Christians in the city of Erzeroum appear to have been satisfactory, in the Plain of Erzeroum a state of lawlessness was beginning to prevail.

It may be partly ascribed to the conciliatory methods of Nouri Bey, the Governor-General, that the outlook did not become more disturbing for the Government. Mr. Shipley stated, in his despatch of the 1st July, that it was owing to the prestige and influence which his Excellency had acquired with the Mussulmans, and which was due to his personal honesty and to the ability hitherto shown by him in the administration of the vilayet, that fears were not entertained of any further immediate outbreak. The only danger lay in a possible attempt on the part of the Imperial authorities to impose fresh taxation. The Mussulmans had succeeded some months before in securing the abolition of the poll tax and the tax on domestic animals, and, flushed by success, they had become so persuaded of the weakness of the central authority, that they were determined to submit to no imposts to which their consent had not previously been obtained.

Unfortunately, the good impression which Nouri Pasha's régime had created, was to a great extent neutralized by the murder of an Armenian Protestant under circumstances of exceptional barbarity, and highly discreditable to the local authorities, "who have apparently made no attempt to identify the principal actors in a drama which was witnessed by half the population of Erzeroum."

It is believed that this outrage was inspired by the Revolutionary Committee; at any rate, it must reflect upon the civil authority, while the military are alleged to be in unquestionable sympathy with the bulk of the population, since, through long association in suffering and discontent, they are now at one with the poorer classes in their aspirations for radical change.

I have entered into a somewhat detailed review of the progress of events in Armenia during the past twelve months, because it is desirable to leave no doubt as to the grounds upon which His Majesty's Government are apprehensive in regard to future developments.

Mussulman feeling has become excited and disturbed. Attempts to impose taxation are met by resistance; deficits in the provincial Exchequers have surpassed the limits of recuperation; land has been thrown out of cultivation, and the productive power of the people continually impaired; the subject population is oppressed and on the verge of starvation. In short, the whole may be described as administrative chaos bordering upon organic disruption.

I accordingly have to instruct your Excellency to seek an interview with the Grand Vizier and to lay before his Highness the serious considerations to which I have directed your attention.

You should explain to him that His Majesty's Government fully realize that the Ottoman Government have not failed to take some steps to assuage the hardships of the suffering inhabitants of these provinces. I allude more especially to the grants-in-aid which have been distributed at various times. Thus, in your despatch No. 206 mention is made of a sum of £ T. 1,300 offered to the Vali of Bitlis, in your despatch No. 631 of £ T. 3,000 distributed to the inhabitants of the Mousb district, and in your despatch No. 664 of £ T. 14,000 remitted through the Agricultural

Bank for the relief of distress in the Bitlis Vilayet. Assurances have also been given to your Excellency that the rigorous exaction of taxes was being relieved.

But these alleviations, however praiseworthy so far as they go, are obviously not upon a scale to afford more than temporary and superficial improvement. The time for half-measures has now passed, and the crisis can only be arrested by the exercise of energy and resolution by the Central Government without procrastination.

You should lay particular stress upon the folly of pursuing a policy of foreign encroachment on the borders of Ottoman provinces, where the resources are impoverished and the population is disaffected.

The most urgent need of the inhabitants, more especially the Christians, is the distribution of such relief as may lighten the present distress, enable them to tide over the winter months, and afford the means of purchasing seed and oxen, with a view to rendering the peasant community self-supporting in the coming year.

It is imperatively incumbent upon the Central Government to take this step in order to mitigate the destitution occasioned by the abuses to which I have been compelled to advert; and your Excellency should do all you can to urge his Highness to make a determined effort in this direction, under proper guarantees that the actual sufferers shall be relieved.

You should take similar action with a view to the definite remission of taxation, the abolition of collective responsibility, and protection against oppression and extortion in the collection of taxes.

You should furthermore continue to press for an improvement in the prison at Moush, and you should press for the early liberation of such prisoners as have been incarcerated merely as suspects.

You should not fail to emphasize the importance of appointing honest and efficient Kaimakams, as recommended by Captain Dickson.

I desire to draw your attention to the expediency of relaxing the restrictions against foreign emigration. Upon this subject His Majesty's Government have been approached by philanthropic Societies in this country, and if steps can be taken to secure the desired facilities the prospects of famine will even now become less disturbing.

In conclusion, I shall be glad to learn how far the several promises of the Grand Vizier, enumerated in your despatch No. 587, have actually been fulfilled.

I am, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[1172] No. 21.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 11.)

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 11, 1908.

FOLLOWING telegram received from Mr. Wratislaw, at Urmia to-day, dated the 9th instant:—

(No. 2.)

The Governor-General of Azerbaijan who is now at Saujboulak, telegraphs to the Persian Commissioner that he is well received and meets with little opposition, but that he is surprised to find that many Persian subjects claim Turkish nationality.

The Turkish Commissioner came to Urmia yesterday to feed (*sic*) with the Persian Commissioner, but returned to Balu. He called on me, and I tried to find out what his views were as regards the meeting place of the Commission, but his answers were evasive. He said that he thought the question could be settled by friendly conversation and perhaps mutual concessions, and that formal negotiations and the exchange of written Memoranda, as the Persians desired, were unnecessary. I said that I did not agree with him. He seems to be wasting time on purpose, perhaps in order to allow time for the other Commissioners to arrive.

The Persian Commissioner is trying to induce Taher Pasha to put the Turkish contentions on paper, but the latter's answers are vague and evasive.

Taher Pasha told me that many villagers had applied to him for Turkish protection, but that he had virtuously rejected their applications.

[1253] No. 22.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 11.)

(No. 11.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January* 11, 1908.

I HAVE received the following telegram No. 4 of the 10th instant, from Urmia:—

"Taher Pasha told me when I called on him to-day that he relied on my good offices to smooth away any difficulties which might arise. I found him much more accommodating than before. A house is being prepared for the Turkish Commission near the town, and he told me he would come to it when invited. He also said he was prepared to admit the extension of the inquiry to cover the whole frontier, and to accept the Persian view as to the method in which the negotiations should be conducted."

Following is the reply which I have sent him to-day:—

"(No. 2.)

"The Grand Vizier told me, in reply to my representations, that he had instructed the Turkish Commissioner twice within the last week to come to an agreement with his Persian colleague as to the meeting place of the Commission, and to do his best to solve the frontier question satisfactorily."

[1230] No. 23.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 13.)

(No. 4.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January* 7, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 599 of the 19th September, 1907, reporting the appointment of Georgiades Bey as Prince of Samos, it would appear that he was unable to smooth over the difficulties that had arisen with the islanders, and he has now been recalled, being replaced by Copassis Bey, Conseiller of State.

These difficulties, which have troubled the polities of Samos for some time back and have led to frequent changes of Governor, have arisen from the contention of the Samians that the "Prince" is bound by the Firmans, especially the supplementary Firman of 1856, concerning the constitution of the Government of the island, to consult the Senate in matters affecting the appointment or removal of certain judicial functionaries, as also police and gendarmerie officers; whereas the practice in vogue, with some rare exceptions, since the establishment of the existing Constitution by Firman in 1834, has been for the Governor to make and revoke such appointments without the consent of the Assembly. Georgiades Bey, while promising by Proclamation to govern according to the spirit of the Firmans and in consultation with the Assembly, proceeded to administer the island in a high-handed and tactless manner regardless of the wishes of the majority and the party in office. The result was the determined opposition of the islanders and his eventual boycott by the Senate and governing body, leading to a complete deadlock. The Porte was seriously preoccupied with this "recalcitrant attitude" of the Samians, and for a moment the intention prevailed of sending troops to compel the submission of the inhabitants to the rule of Georgiades Bey. The Sultan was, however, reluctant to employ force, and thus perhaps create an international question, and, some weeks ago, a further Commission was sent to Samos in the hope of arranging matters amicably. The islanders, however, proved obdurate, and insisted on their interpretation of the Firmans and the recall of the Governor. At this stage His Majesty the Sultan sent me a private message requesting my friendly advice, and asking me for suggestions as to the best course to pursue with a view to calming the existing agitation in the island. I informed His Majesty in reply that, while refraining from giving a definite opinion as to the point of interpretation of the Firmans in dispute between the Porte and the Samians, the spirit of those Firmans seemed to imply the obligation of the Prince to consult the Assembly about the appointments in the police, gendarmerie, &c., service of the island, and that the arbitrary conduct of Georgiades Bey had been largely accountable for the present frame of mind of the Samians. I added that it was desirable on general grounds that the Governor should modify his attitude towards

the Assembly so as to prevent the latter from being driven to appeal to the three Protecting Powers.

I at the same time unofficially intimated to the Porte that, of the available candidates, Copassis Bey seemed to me suitable. He is a native of Crete, and as Secretary-General there, had considerable experience in the administration of that turbulent island. He speaks and writes English and is a strong Anglophil. He is tactful and conciliatory, and may succeed in tiding over the present difficulties until the next Samian elections, some eleven months hence, when the Opposition is most likely to come to power, and the politics of Samos will enter on a less acute stage.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[1232] No. 24.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 6.)
Sir,

Pera, January 7, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 15 of the 9th January, 1905, reporting the murder near Diarbekir of an Armenian photographer, named Chavrashian, and his aged mother in circumstances of exceptional brutality, I now have the honour to report that Hamdullah Bey, the Kurdish Chief who instigated the crime, has at last been condemned to three years' imprisonment for his connection with the affair. His punishment, which I have repeatedly urged, is the more satisfactory, as in the first instance he was not only allowed to go free, but received a quasi-official appointment, and was treated with honour by the authorities of Diarbekir after the crime had become known.

I trust that the sentence now passed upon him will produce a good impression amongst the neighbouring Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR

[1241] No. 25.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 15.)
Sir,

Pera, January 8, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 169 of the 20th ultimo, reporting that orders had been sent to Van to prepare for mobilization at short notice, and to my despatch No. 791 of the 24th ultimo, reporting that efforts were being made to collect reserves and recruits at Mosul, I am now informed that orders have been sent to the military authorities of Trebizond to hold the Redifs of that military district in readiness on the alleged pretext that they may be required to repel an attack on the part of the Armenian revolutionaries on the Russian frontier. The Redifs of the Ghumushkhane district have also been called out for an unknown destination, while from Bitlis I learn that the Redifs have been warned to join the colours and that other minor military preparations are noticeable. Officers have been dispatched from Bitlis to ascertain how many of the Hamidieh irregulars are available for active service, and two battalions are believed to be about to leave Moush for Van. The Commandant of Bitlis has informed His Majesty's Vice-Consul that eleven battalions of the 8th Division, four battalions of which belong to the Bitlis Vilayet, have orders to proceed to the Persian frontier as soon as the necessary funds are forthcoming, their place being filled by Redifs. Lastly, I have received a report from His Majesty's Consuls in Syria that General Perteh Pasha, accompanied by a number of officers, has passed through Beirout and arrived at Aleppo on the 30th ultimo with 36 mountain and 6 field guns, 14,000 Mauser rifles, and 1,200 cases of ammunition destined for the 6th Army Corps at Bagdad. I have made inquiries at the Porte as to the meaning of these military preparations. In reply the Grand Vizier said that they were connected with the reorganization of the 6th Army Corps, which had been intrusted to General Perteh Pasha, a distinguished young soldier who was educated in Berlin and attached as Military Attaché to the Japanese Army, where Mr. Barclay tells me he saw

considerable service. At the same time his Highness implied that in the uncertain condition of affairs in Persia they desired to be prepared for eventualities, although he again assured me that they had no aggressive intentions towards that country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[1339] No. 26.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 13.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 9th instant, relative to the Muscat Arbitration Award.

India Office, January 11, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January 9, 1908.*

PLEASE see my telegram of the 9th December, 1907, as to Muscat. Proposals made in last two paragraphs of Memorandum, dated the 6th August, 1907, have been formally accepted by the French Government. Settlement of outstanding details should now be arranged locally in conjunction with French Consul. Please instruct British Consul accordingly.

[1372] No. 27.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 16.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 13, 1908.*

PLEASE refer to my telegram No. 4 of the 4th instant respecting Abu Musa.

Major Cox has been informed by German Consul that intention has been abandoned to dispatch ship to take away oxide; latter also promised that, without Cox' knowledge, no attempt will be made to remove it.

Dr. Listemann declared he had been entirely unaware of our protectorate over Shargah.

[1428] No. 28.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 17. Confidential.)
Sir,

Constantinople, January 10, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 712, Confidential, of the 25th November last, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad containing a further Report on the Suklawiya Canal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 28.

Consul-General Ramsay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 123. Strictly Confidential.)

Sir, *Bagdad, December 3, 1907.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 118, dated the 19th October, 1907, I have the honour to submit a further Report on the Suklawiya Canal.

2. On or about the 21st October, 1907, M. Cugnin received intimation that his services were not at present required by the Turkish Government. He got these orders when he was at Kananiya, and as he is interested in the work that is going on there, he stayed to see how it was being done, and he made use of his time in further studying the question of a site for the head works of a future canal taking out of the Euphrates at or near Kananiya. He has drawn up a note on the subject illustrated with three plans, and I have now the honour to forward, for your Excellency's information, a copy of the note and of the plans which M. Cugnin has had the kindness to give to me.* After reading the note, I think that there can be no doubt that the dam recently made will not last for long, and consequently the Turkish Government will again be forced to give attention to the question of controlling this part of the Euphrates. If the matter is neglected beyond a certain point, there is a danger that the Euphrates may permanently join the Tigris near Bagdad, and this would of course be a disaster of great magnitude for the country and the Government, and also for the Samcych Department, which has valuable properties on the Hindiya Canal, which would then be dry. The position, therefore, seems to be that if the Turkish plan of entirely closing the waterway is successful, a valuable tract of land is kept out of cultivation, and if it fails Bagdad and all the country along the lower reaches of the Euphrates are in danger of being laid waste either by floods or drought.

3. Several Turkish attempts to control the water of the Euphrates at this point have failed, and it seems probable that the latest attempt will also fail. Consequently, it seems just possible that the Turkish Government may realize that the matter is one that can only be satisfactorily settled by the grant of a concession to a powerful Company. Such a Company would be obliged to protect its canal—and at the same time Bagdad—from the floods of the Euphrates, and the Canal would not therefore be a real danger to Bagdad, but an insurance. At present it is not the personal interest of any capable and responsible person to see that the dams along the Euphrates and above Kananiya are kept in good repair.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. RAMSAY, *Major, Officiating Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, and Acting British Consul-General, Bagdad.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 28.

Note by M. Cugnin on the Suklawiya Canal.

A PARTIR de l'Euphrate à Kananiya et sur une longueur d'environ 50 kilom., le canal a une largeur moyenne de 80 mètres, et quand il y a communication avec le fleuve, la profondeur d'eau à l'époque des basses eaux est dans cette partie de 3 mètres à 3 mètres 50 centim. et le débit de 110 mètres cubes par seconde, soit un peu plus du tiers du débit de l'Euphrate en basses eaux. Après ces 30 kilom., le canal se déverse dans un immense bas-fond, au nord des ruines d'Agar-Gouf, dans lequel s'accumulent les eaux en formant un marais où il y a de l'eau pendant la plus grande partie de l'année, même quand la communication avec l'Euphrate n'existe pas. Quand il y a communication avec l'Euphrate, ce marais est un véritable lac de 30 kilom. de l'ouest à l'est et de 20 kilom. du sud au nord, avec des profondeurs d'eau allant jusqu'à 6 mètres. Le Lac d'Agar-Gouf se déverse dans le Tigre par plusieurs canaux, dont le plus important a 15 kilom. de longueur et sur lequel est le pont de Kheur, près de son embouchure dans le Tigre. C'est le seul qui soit navigable, les

* Sketch Map not reproduced.

autres petits canaux servent à l'arrosage des terrains compris entre Bagdad et Marmoudié, qui font partie des domaines Impériaux (Sénié). La plus forte pente du Canal de Saklavié se trouve sur les 30 premiers kilomètres de l'Euphrate au Lac d'Agar-Gouf, où l'eau a une vitesse à la surface de 1 mètre 15 centim. à la seconde à l'époque des basses eaux. A l'aide de la section que nous avons prise du canal et de la vitesse de l'eau à la surface, la formule de Bazin sur l'écoulement de l'eau dans un canal en terre permet de déterminer la pente de la surface de l'eau. Cette formule donne pour cette partie une pente de 0·00016 mètre par mètre, ou 0·16 mètre par kilom.

En partant de l'Euphrate le Canal de Kananiya est creusé dans un terrain extrêmement affouillable, composé de sable très fin non argileux. Le barrage en fascinages fait cette année (1907) pour barrer le canal a été commencé dans une partie où la profondeur de l'eau était primitivement de 1 mètre 50 centim. En avançant des deux rives et au fur et à mesure que le pertuis ou ouverture central se rétrécissait, la profondeur de l'eau augmenta considérablement et atteint 15 mètres, ce qui explique la difficulté que présente cette opération. Un peu plus loin, à 1½ kilom. de l'Euphrate, le canal passe sur un banc d'argile pure, compacte sur lequel l'eau coule en formant un rapide; ce banc limite ou tout au moins ralentit le creusement du lit du canal sous l'action du courant de l'eau. Enfin plus loin à 6½ kilom. de l'Euphrate le Canal de Kananiya passe sur un banc de roche calcaire, qui a servi de base à un ouvrage en briques construit en 1871, lequel a été contourné par les eaux après avoir été submergé à la première crue. On voit encore cet ouvrage, qui est en mauvais état, mais dont l'assiette s'est maintenue intacte. Le banc de roche calcaire est surmonté d'une couche de gravier légèrement agglomeré par un mortier argileux; au-dessus de cette couche est une couche de marne gypseuse. La roche calcaire en cet endroit est à 6 ou 7 mètres, au-dessous du niveau du sol de la plaine d'alluvions, qui est sur la rive droite du canal. Sur la rive gauche ces différentes couches se relèvent en formant un petit plateau de 4 à 5 mètres d'élévation au-dessus de la plaine d'alluvions, submersible par les grandes crues de l'Euphrate, et que le Canal de Kananiya suit sur une certaine longueur. Il est très probable que la couche calcaire se prolonge sur la rive droite du Canal de Kananiya, en s'enfonçant sur les alluvions pour se relever à 6 kilom. plus loin sur la rive droite du Canal de Suklawiya, en formant un autre plateau non loin du canal. C'est très probablement dans cette brèche que toutes les eaux de l'Euphrate passaient après l'époque diluvienne.

De ces observations, il ressort très nettement qu'une digue reliant les deux plateaux bas protégerait efficacement le bassin du Tigre contre les crues de l'Euphrate, sans craindre que dans l'avenir cette digue soit atteinte par l'Euphrate, dont le lit se modifie continuellement au milieu d'alluvions récentes. Cette digue aurait une longueur de 6 kilom. et une hauteur de 1 mètre 50 centim. au maximum, les plus fortes crues de l'Euphrate ne dépassant pas 0·50 mètre au-dessus de la plaine. L'ouvrage régulateur de prise d'eau avec écluse devra être placé à peu près à l'emplacement de l'ancien ouvrage en briques, construit en 1871, mais probablement un peu plus à gauche, afin de profiter du banc calcaire, non seulement comme base pour les fondations, mais aussi pour avoir une meilleure protection contre les affouillements aux abords de l'ouvrage. Un nivellement fait de cet emplacement jusqu'à l'Euphrate, et de petits sondages par puits, suffiront pour déterminer le meilleur emplacement. Le banc de roche dont il est parlé ci-dessus est formé de calcaire argileux donnant de la chaux hydraulique.

Il est très probable que le barrage en fascinages, exécuté cette année pour fermer le Canal de Kananiya, ne sera pas complété par un barrage imperméable en terre, d'une épaisseur suffisante, et à la première crue il sera emporté. Ou bien les digues de protection (si on les commence) seront incomplètes et une nouvelle coupure se formera. Si même (ce qui est invraisemblable) on exécutait tous les travaux de protection, pour compléter le barrage en fascinages, il est certain que la berge de l'Euphrate, rive gauche, continuant à être rongée, entamera la digue de protection, beaucoup trop rapprochée de cette berge ou bien les coupures faites par les Arabes dans la digue pour faire passer leurs rigoles d'arrosage rompront cette digue. Il peut encore arriver que les Arabes coupent eux-mêmes les digues, comme cela arrive fréquemment, pour profiter de l'inondation.

En 1877, après avoir fermé le canal par un très grand barrage en fascinages, placé à 400 mètres de la berge du fleuve et un barrage en fascinages, placé à 100 mètres de la berge du fleuve, et un barrage en terre à 1,500 mètres de cette même berge, on fit deux digues se réunissant aux digues des Arabes le long de la berge. A la dernière crue, au commencement de 1907, la digue la plus rapprochée du fleuve fut ouverte par un Arabe pour arroser ses cultures. La brèche, étant près du fleuve et du canal,

s'agrandit sans qu'il fût possible de s'en rendre maître et les cultures furent noyées. Les Arabes coupèrent alors la deuxième ligne de digues sur le canal même, dans l'espoir absurde de faire baisser le niveau des eaux, en leur donnant un écoulement par le canal. Ceci nous a été rapporté par les gendarmes ("zaptiehs") chargés de la surveillance des digues, dont le poste se trouve à l'emplacement du barrage de 1877 et depuis cette époque. Malgré ce poste de surveillance, les digues ont toujours été en très mauvais état et sans le moindre entretien. A chaque crue, il arrive que les eaux traversent les digues en un plus ou moins grand nombre de points et s'écoulent par le canal, mais comme le volume d'eau ainsi déversé dans le marais d'Agar-Gouf n'est pas suffisant pour inonder la ville même de Bagdad sur la rive droite du Tigre, on ne s'en préoccupait pas et le poste de zaptiehs n'était inquiété par personne, on paraissait même l'avoir oublié, malgré les rapports de ces pauvres zaptiehs, signalant des ruptures produites et l'impossibilité où ils étaient de surveiller plus de 30 kilom. de digues. La crue de 1907 a été très forte, la rupture dans la première digue étant très près du fleuve et du canal, et une coupure profonde ayant été faite par les Arabes à la deuxième digue et dans le canal même, il s'est formé par affouillement du terrain une communication profonde entre le fleuve et le canal, en donnant un écoulement très important des eaux dans le Lac d'Agar-Gouf et une très grande inondation de la ville de Bagdad sur la rive droite, qui amena la ruine de nombreuses maisons et des pertes énormes. On s'est alors décidé à fermer le canal, mais tardivement, car on eut à craindre les crues de Novembre, qui pouvaient compromettre le succès de cette opération. L'emplacement choisi pour le barrage en fascinages est beaucoup trop près de la berge du fleuve; le canal avait à cet emplacement une largeur de 170 mètres avec une profondeur d'eau de 1 mètre 50 centim. à l'étiage. On pensait ne rencontrer aucune difficulté, avec une profondeur d'eau aussi faible, mais cet emplacement a été des plus mal choisi, car le terrain est très affouillable, tandis qu'un peu plus loin, on pouvait trouver un fond d'argile compacte inaffouillable, ou même plus loin un fond rocheux comme nous l'avons indiqué précédemment.

Les difficultés et les dépenses ayant été beaucoup plus grandes qu'on ne le pensait, sans que l'on se rende compte des raisons, et comme on ne se rend pas davantage compte de toutes les raisons qui ont amené la coupure actuelle, il est absolument certain qu'après avoir constaté l'inutilité de ces derniers efforts, on sera une fois de plus convaincu de l'impossibilité d'obtenir une protection durable par suite de la nature du terrain. C'est cette conviction qui fait que les autorités de Bagdad rejetteront toute proposition d'ouverture d'un canal avec un ouvrage régulateur, quelque petit qu'il soit, comme on l'a déjà demandé pour rétablir les cultures de riz dans le bas-fond d'Agar-Gouf, qui donnaient annuellement plus de 12,000 tonnes de riz, avant la fermeture du canal. Il faut ajouter que l'on objecte encore une autre raison aux demandes qui sont faites pour rétablir ces cultures de riz, c'est qu'elles produiraient des foyers de fièvre dans les environs de Bagdad!

Pour donner une petite idée de l'importance du Canal de Saklawiya, comme voie navigable, il est bon de citer le fait suivant :—

Le barrage en fascinages, construit cette année, étant presque terminé, ne laissant de libre au milieu qu'un passage étroit de quelques mètres, un Arabe offrit £T. 3 pour avoir la permission de faire passer trois petites embarcations contenant chacune 1,000 à 1,500 kilog. de marchandises venant d'Alep par Meskéné et à destination de Bagdad.

(Signé) L. CUGNIN, *Ingénieur, E. C. P.*

Bagdad, le 1er Décembre, 1907.

[1519] No. 29.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received January* 15.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 10th January, relative to the situation at Abu Musa.

A copy has been sent to the Director of Military Operations and to the Director of Naval Intelligence.

India Office, January 14, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, January* 10, 1908.

ON the 8th instant German case regarding Abu Musa was received from Foreign Office. Copies of papers were sent to you, and also direct to Resident in Persian Gulf, for information, by mail of the 10th instant. Please telegraph any criticism of specific points in German case as shown in these papers, or any corrections of statements of facts made therein. Resident, Persian Gulf, should confine himself to observing, and should on no account enter into any sort of discussion. In order to insure that Wönckhaus is given all proper facilities for removing accumulated oxide without trouble or conflict with the Sheikh or his men, it would be desirable that some official should visit Abu Musa. As information will be material if claim for compensation on account of loss under his contract is put forward by Wönckhaus, number of tons of oxide removed by him should be ascertained. Pending further discussion no new mining should proceed. German Government have been informed of this condition, but have also been told that oxide already mined may be removed by Wönckhaus.

[1697] No. 30

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received January* 16.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 15th instant, relative to the situation at Abu Musa.

(A copy will be sent to the Director of Military Operations and to the Director of Naval Intelligence.)

India Office, January 16, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 30.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *January* 15, 1908.

WE repeat, for information, following telegrams regarding Abu Musa from Resident in Persian Gulf :—

1. Dated 10th instant, addressed to Tehran Legation, and repeated to India :—

"Abu Musa question was broached for first time by my German colleague, who paid me friendly visit to-day. He assured me that voyage of the previous steam-ship 'Savoia' to Abu Musa had been countermanded, though she had been originally intended to go there, and that no intention of sending 'Sicilia' or any other ship had since been entertained. He inquired as to source of the report regarding the 'Sicilia' which had been sent to Tehran. I informed him, after gratefully accepting his frank assurance, that a telegram from myself, reporting information which had reached me, had evidently formed the basis of communication made by British to German Legation.

"I went on to say that we had always advised Sheikh to allow Hassan Sammiyeh to remove oxide already accumulated without making difficulty, but that I was very anxious to avoid anything like difficulty with the Sheikh's Arab guards, which would certainly be the result if, after what had occurred, any ship now attempted to operate at the island without a previous communication having been made through me to the Sheikh. My German colleague concurred in this, and undertook that if contingency arose he would first communicate with me.

"In reply to a question why he had apparently worked behind my back hitherto in sending his deputy and writing letters direct to the Sheikh, he stated that he had no idea that Shargah was under our protection when he acted in this way."

2. Dated 12th instant:—

"With reference to your telegrams of yesterday and to-day, warning previously given by me to the Sheikh regarding removal of accumulated oxide has been repeated. I have received promise from German Consul that, as soon as it is desired to send a ship for that purpose, early intimation will be given me. Arrangements for dispatch of official, either by German ship or separately, will then be made as directed."

Your telegram of 10th instant was repeated to Resident by us on 11th instant.

1720] No. 31.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 17.)

(No. 10. Commercial.)

Sir, *Pera, January 13, 1908.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 45, Commercial, of the 30th April, and to subsequent correspondence respecting the scheme for constructing a dam across the Hindié canal, I have the honour to transmit the accompanying extract from a confidential Memorandum from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, from which you will see that M. Cugnin, the French engineer whose plans for the project have been accepted in principle, but who has since been discharged from Turkish service, is entitled under his contract to supervise the work if it is carried out in accordance with his plans.

I understand that Mr. G. Lloyd is endeavouring to interest British capitalists in this undertaking, and I think it would be well if the information contained in the accompanying extract could be communicated to him without delay.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 31.

Extract from Confidential Memorandum No. 12 by Consul-General Nowmarch.

M. CUGNIN. My official reports will have shown that M. Cugnin has been very friendly to me. When I asked him what he was going to do now, he said that he should return to France, as he had nothing to keep him here, but he said that he would stay on here if he could find any work to keep him employed. I fancy that he would like to stay on, so as to be on the spot if the Turkish Government decide to carry out his project for the Hindié barrage. He tells me that under the terms of his contract he is entitled to superintend the work if it is carried out in accordance with his project, but he says that he will raise objection if the Turks employ another engineer to carry out his plans. The official reason given him for his dismissal is that there may be delay in carrying out the project.

[1339] No. 32.

Sir Edward Grey to M. Cambon.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 17, 1908.*

WITH reference to M. Geoffray's note of the 24th ultimo, in which he was good enough to state that the French Government formally accept the proposals of His Majesty's Government contained in my Memorandum of the 6th August, 1907, respecting the Award of The Hague Tribunal in the Muscat Arbitration case, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Government of India have been requested by telegraph to send instructions to Major Grey to settle the outstanding details in conjunction with the French Consul in accordance with the agreement arrived at by the two Governments.

I have, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[1994] No. 33.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 281.)

Sir, *Tehran, December 31, 1907.*

ON the 6th ultimo I received from the German Legation the Memorandum of which a copy is inclosed, stating that certain employés of the German firm of Wönckhaus had been driven by the Sheikh of Shargah from the mines of red oxide on Abu Musa Island, which they were working in virtue of an Agreement with the concessionnaires, and that one of His Majesty's ships had been present to afford assistance to the Sheikh.

I replied, in a private note to M. Stemrich, with whom I was on very friendly terms, that I would telegraph for a report of the occurrence from His Majesty's Resident at Bushire, but that, from what I knew of the case, I believed that Messrs. Wönckhaus' contract was invalid, as it had been made with only one of three joint concessionnaires, and without the knowledge or consent of the other two. In a subsequent conversation I told him that the Sheikh of Shargah was under British protection. I said also that I was not sure how far the Legation had jurisdiction in such a question, but I was inclined to believe that it rested wholly with His Majesty's Resident at Bushire.

Major Cox's telegraphic report reached me on the 15th, and on the same day I communicated to M. Stemrich the Memorandum of which a copy is inclosed.

The German Minister replied acknowledging my Memorandum, and saying that he expected a report from the German Consul at Bushire, of the contents of which I expected to be informed by the German Chargé d'Affaires; but beyond a casual reference to it by myself a few days later, there was no mention of the case until the 14th December, when I learnt from Major Cox's telegram, of which a paraphrase is inclosed, that the German Consul had been in direct and official communication with the Sheikh, refusing to recognize the cancellation of the Concession, and threatening him with a claim for heavy damages.

I therefore sent my telegram No. 379 of the 14th December to you, Sir, suggesting that I should be authorized to inform Baron Richthofen of the Sheikh's obligations to His Majesty's Government under the Protectorate Treaty of the 7th March, 1892, and requesting him to instruct Dr. Listemann to regulate his conduct accordingly. At the same time I requested Major Cox to desire the Sheikh to take no notice of Dr. Listemann's letter.

On the 20th instant, in accordance with your instructions, I addressed to Baron von Richthofen the letter of which a copy is inclosed. Having received no reply on the 29th, I wrote asking for one, and the following day Baron von Richthofen called on me. He said that he had delayed answering my letter, as he was expecting instructions from Berlin on the question, but he assured me that he had already informed Dr. Listemann of our relations with the Sheikh of Shargah, and would write to me in that sense. To-day I received the promised note, copy of which I inclose herewith.

He said, however, that German Consular officials had frequently had direct communications with the Sheikh before now, and that in any case Dr. Listemann's present letter had been quite unofficial. I replied that this was the first we had heard of any such irregular communications, and that in any case a written communication conveyed by the Consul's Dragoman could scarcely be looked upon as private.

Baron von Richthofen also stated that the Sheikh had fired upon a German subject named Brown, when he was trying to land at Abu Musa from a Hamburg-America steamer, for the purpose of removing some machinery and other tackle belonging to Messrs. Wönckhaus, and that this was a serious matter. I said I had no news of this. But I pointed out again that, even if Wönckhaus' contract had been valid, which it was not, German agents had no business to have mining machinery on land or to work there, as the contract had only stipulated for delivery on board.

As regards the validity of the contract, my German colleague asserted that Messrs. Wönckhaus have a private letter of some kind from the other two concessionnaires agreeing to the contract.

I said that, on the contrary, I had written information stating clearly that one at least of the concessionnaires (Esa-bin-Abdul Latif) had always protested against the

contract, and denied its validity as having been made without his knowledge or assent. I have, however, asked Major Cox to inform me whether there is any foundation for these statements.

I gather that the German Legation contemplates justifying Dr. Listemann's action on the ground that Abu Musa is Persian territory, and does not form part of the Sheikh of Shargah's dominions under our protection. Baron von Richthofen has been trying to obtain a written declaration on the point from the Persian Government, but Mushir-ed-Dowleh is unwilling to make any statement either one way or another. I propose to remind his Excellency of the fact that in 1904 the Persian flag was removed from the island on our demand, and to warn him of the complications which will be entailed by an attempt to revive the Persian claim to the island.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 33.

Telegram communicated by the German Legation, November 6, 1907.

Bushire [undated].

WÖNCKHAUS, Lingah, reports that at instigation of English and under shelter of gun-boat "Lapwing," the Sheikh of Shargah sent 200 armed men to Island of Abu Musu, to prevent firm's workmen working red oxide mines. Brown sailed thither on the 22nd ultimo for inquiry, was shot at, unhurt and unallowed to land, thus compelled to return to Linga. Workmen were driven out of the island in the presence of gun-boat with English Consul from Bandar Abbas on board, who state they appeared on the scene to keep peace, whereas workmen say in order to help Sheikh in their expulsion. Listemann will probably arrive next Monday.—ABDUL HUSSEIN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 33.

Memorandum.

ON the 6th November the German Legation communicated to the British Legation a telegram from Bushire, signed Abdul Hussein, reporting complaints from Wönckhaus, Lingah, relative to the working of the red oxide mines at Abu Musa. It is evident that this telegram has been sent upon erroneous information as to the alleged facts of the complaint, and also in complete misapprehension of the existing conditions at Abu Musa. The real facts and conditions are set forth below for the information of the German Legation.

The privilege of extracting oxide from Abu Musa had been leased on a year's basis by the Sheikh of Shargah to a Syndicate of three British subjects. One of the concessionnaires complained to the Sheikh a few months ago that, without his knowledge or concurrence, a monopoly of the purchase of the output of oxide had been granted to a fourth party by another of the concessionnaires. The obvious illegality and invalidity of such a grant were pointed out to the German Minister in a letter by Mr. Marling acknowledging the receipt of the telegram in question.

In view, therefore, of the fact that one of three concessionnaires was clearly incapable of granting a monopoly without authorization from his colleagues, and in view of the Sheikh's own strong personal objection to the existence of such a monopoly, the latter decided to resume the Concession, and accordingly informed the British concessionnaire to this effect. The British concessionnaire, however, did not stop his mining operations on receipts of this notice. On the 10th October, therefore, the Sheikh formally notified him that he would be forcibly ejected if, within ten days, he had not removed his workmen and implements. As, however, the concessionnaire still neglected to comply, an armed guard was sent by the Sheikh to carry out the eviction. To avoid unnecessary harshness or violence it was deemed advisable that the British Consul at Bandar Abbas should be present as a spectator on board His Majesty's ship "Lapwing."

From this the following points are clear:—

1. That it was the British subject whose workmen were ejected, not M. Wönckhaus' employés; that if any one could consider himself harshly used—which was apparently not the case—it would be the British subject, not M. Wönckhaus;

2. That the British Consul was present in a gun-boat in the interests of good order in a case which concerned a British subject. Any other allegations, such as those made in Abdul Hussein's telegram, are therefore quite erroneous;

3. That even if M. Wönckhaus' contract was valid—and he must undoubtedly, as a business man, have known that it was not—it concerned only the purchase of oxide delivered on board steamers, and he had no concern whatever either with the mines or with mining operations.

The British Legation hopes that the foregoing remarks have made it clear to the German Legation that the question concerns the Sheikh of Shargah and the British concessionnaire alone, and that the agent, Abdul Hussein, was in ignorance of the true facts of the case when he dispatched his telegram.

The Concession having now been resumed by its owner, the differences between the lessees have been removed by the removal from their hands of the subject of contention; and the whole matter seems, therefore, to call for no further comment.

British Legation, Tehran, November 15, 1907.

Inclosure 3 in No. 33.

Major Cox to Mr. Marling.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bushire, December 13, 1907.*

WITH reference to Abu Musa Island incident, I have to report that Dragoman of German Consulate proceeded to Shargah on the 22nd November from Bushire, accompanied by concessionnaire. This individual presented on the 28th November to the Sheikh of Shargah and to his uncle, Sheikh Salim, two official letters addressed to them respectively by the German Consul at Bushire; I have just received the original letters from the Sheikh.

Following are contents of letters:—

1. Refusal to accept Sheikh's cancellation of lease;
2. Protest against proceedings of Sheikh; and
3. Threat to claim 1 lakh should permission not be granted to ship oxide.

In view of fact that you were approached by German Minister on the 19th November, we should, in my opinion, strongly take exception to action of German Consul in trying, by a direct communication of the nature explained above, to bluff Sheikh, who is under British protection. If you share this view, kindly state whether I am to communicate with German Representative here, or whether matter will be dealt with at Tehran.

No reply has been vouchsafed to letters by Sheikh; my colleague and myself have not broached question of Abu Musa Island.

Inclosure 4 in No. 33.

Mr. Marling to Baron von Richthofen.

M. le Chargé d'Affaires et cher Collègue, *Téhéran, le 20 Décembre, 1907.*

LE 6 Novembre M. Stemrich a bien voulu me communiquer un télégramme qu'il avait reçu de l'agent de la maison Allemande Wönckhaus, qui croyait avoir lieu de se plaindre des mesures prises par le Cheikh de Chargah dans le but de sauvegarder ses droits domaniaux en ce qui concerne les gisements d'oxide à l'Ile d'Abou Mousa. Le 15 du même mois je lui ai fourni un aide-mémoire, que vous trouverez sans doute dans les archives de votre Légation, où je lui ai exposé tous les faits, en donnant les explications voulues.

Il est évident que M. Stemrich n'ignorait pas que les Cheikhs de Chargah jouissent de la protection Britannique; du reste, je le lui ai dit verbalement.

Or, je viens d'apprendre que le 19 Novembre M. le Consul d'Allemagne à Bouchir a adressé au Cheikh une lettre le menaçant d'une réclamation en dommages-intérêts, et ceci sans consulter son collègue Anglais, de qui, en sa qualité de Résident dans le Golfe Persique, relève toute question de ce genre.

J'en conclus que M. le Dr. Listemann ignorait la nature des relations existant entre le Cheikh et mon Gouvernement.

En effet, les Cheikhs de Chargah se trouvent sous la protection Britannique depuis la signature du Traité de 1820, et tout récemment encore, c'est-à-dire en 1892, un Traité affirmant de nouveau ce Protectorat a été signé et dûment publié. Par cet instrument le Cheikh s'est engagé, ainsi que ses successeurs, entre autres stipulations, à n'avoir aucunes relations de quelque sorte que ce fût avec un Gouvernement étranger autre que le Gouvernement Britannique.

En ces circonstances vous trouverez sans doute opportun de rappeler ces faits à votre Agent Consulaire à Bouchir pour sa gouverne, et de l'inviter à s'y conformer à l'avenir.

En ce qui concerne le fond de la réclamation de MM. Wönckhaus, je saisis cette occasion de vous faire remarquer que, ainsi que j'ai eu l'honneur de l'expliquer à M. Stemrich dans mon aide-mémoire sus-mentionné, le contrat que la maison Wönckhaus a passé avec Hassan Samaiyeh est nul et non avenu, vu que ce contrat a été conclu à l'insu de ses associés dont un, en apprenant plus tard les agissements subreptices de Hassan Samaiyeh, s'y est énergiquement opposé. Le contrat, par conséquent, était illégal et frauduleux. D'ailleurs, il est à noter que Hassan Samaiyeh est sujet Britannique.

Je vous prie, &c.
(Signé) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 5 in No. 33.

Baron von Richthofen to Mr. Marling.

M. le Chargé d'Affaires et cher Collègue, *Le 31 Décembre*, 1907.

EN réponse à la note que vous avez bien voulu me faire parvenir en date du 20 Décembre, 1907, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire part qu'il y a déjà quelque temps que j'ai donné l'ordre au Consul Impérial à Bouchir de cesser ses démarches dans l'affaire de l'Ile Abou Mousa, vu que je me trouve jusqu'à présent sans instructions de la part de mon Gouvernement.

Par cette raison même je suis de l'avis que la question de principes, à laquelle vous touchez dans votre note, doit rester en suspens, et je me vois par conséquent hors d'état de répondre aux remarques que vous avez faites dans votre communication sur l'affaire de l'Ile Abou Mousa.

Je vous prie, &c.
Le Chargé d'Affaires d'Allemagne.
(Signé) vos RICHTHOFEN.

[2079] No. 34.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 22.)

Sir, *Pera, January 14, 1908.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 4 of the 7th instant, reporting on the circumstances which led to the recall of Prince Georgiades Bey, Prince Governor of Samos, I have the honour to report that Andréa Kopassi Bey, Member of the Council of State, has now been appointed Prince Governor of the island.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[2218] No. 35.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 20.)

Sir, *India Office, January 18, 1908.*

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose, to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a Secret letter from the Government of India as to the judicial powers of the Political Agent in Bahrein.

The Government of India recommend, with a view to defining and regularizing the powers now exercised by the Political Agent over British subjects, that an Order in Council should be promulgated under which he should be appointed a Justice of the Peace, and endowed with the powers of a district Judge in direct subordination to the High Court of Bombay. It is further recommended that the Order in Council should be so framed, if possible, as to enable the Political Agent to perform the functions of a notary public.

Mr. Morley considers that these recommendations may be adopted, and would commend them for Sir E. Grey's consideration.

The more difficult question of providing by Order in Council for the jurisdiction of the British Political Agent over foreigners is raised in paragraph 4 of the letter of the Government of India. Mr. Morley assumes that British protection over Bahrein is a fact, and that it is desirable to publish it in due course by taking such public action as is suggested. The only question is whether the present opportunity is favourable to the adoption of that course, and whether it is not preferable to continue action on the above assumption until a long usage has been established. Such was the view taken in Mr. Brodrick's despatch of the 10th November, 1905. It is possible, however, that Sir E. Grey may consider that recent developments of the situation in the Gulf require a definite public notification of the rights that His Majesty's Government possess and intend to exercise as the Protecting Power in Bahrein.

As to the notifications, apart from the Treaty of 1880, published in volume x of "Aitchison," that have been made in the past to foreign Powers to which the Government of India refer, it may be observed that the Turkish Government have never, so far as Mr. Morley is aware, accepted the declaration of our protectorate repeatedly made to them. Nor have the Persian Government formally recognized the right of the British Resident at Bushire to use his good offices on behalf of Bahreinese.

The correspondence with the American Government terminates with the letter from the Foreign Office to this Office of the 18th December, 1899. As regards France, in addition to the papers printed in the inclosures to the Government of India's letter, attention is drawn to the correspondence ending with the letter from this Office of the 8th September, 1904, regarding the proposal of the French Government to include Bahrein in the sphere of the duties of their Vice-Consul at Bushire.

As regards Germany, a copy of a demi-official letter from Sir T. Sanderson of the 2nd December, 1895, is inclosed, from which it will be seen that the list of "Protectorates and spheres of influence not forming territories of His Britannic Majesty," inclosed with the letter from this Office of the 4th October, 1895, was not communicated to the German Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) COLIN G. CAMPBELL.

Inclosure 1 in No. 35.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December 2, 1895.*

WE have taken note of the warning given in your letter to me of the 26th November, and will not say anything to the German or other Governments about Indian Protectorates or spheres of influence without further communication with the India Office.

You will see by the copy of Lord Salisbury's note to Count Metternich of the 8th October, of which copy was sent officially a few days ago, that it only mentioned the

Indian territories to which the Anglo-German Extradition Treaty of 1894 applies. The Protectorates and spheres of influence (to which, by the way, the Treaty does not apply) were not described or enumerated, so no harm has been done.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 35.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Secret.)

Sir, *Simla, November* 14, 1907.

WE have the honour to address you on the subject of the judicial powers exercised by our Agent in Bahrein.

2. The Agent has at present the powers of a Magistrate of the first class, as described in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, in respect of offences committed by native Indian subjects of His Majesty in the Island of Bahrein and on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf. He also extends his good offices to European foreigners in any disputes between them and the Chief of Bahrein or his subjects.

Next, he holds a Court, composed of himself and a representative of the Chief, for the trial of cases in which the accused is a Bahrein subject or a foreigner who prefers not to invoke British good offices and the other party is a British or foreign subject who does so.

Finally, he controls a local Court of Arbitration for the adjustment of civil disputes between British subjects and protégés, on the one hand, and Bahrein subjects or persons of any other nationality, on the other hand. This Court has been in existence for over fifty years.

He also, on occasions, issues bills of health, signs marine protests, and legalizes signatures on behalf of British Indian subjects. Strictly speaking, however, he has no legal authority for undertaking these latter duties.

3. With a view to define and regularize the powers exercised over British subjects by the Agent, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf has put forward the suggestion that he should be appointed to be a Justice of the Peace and endowed with the powers of a district Judge, in direct subordination to the High Court of Bombay. We concur in this recommendation, but with reference to clause 2 of "The Indian Foreign Jurisdiction Order in Council, 1902," we understand that it would first be necessary for Bahrein to be declared by His Majesty in Council to be a territory in which jurisdiction is exercised by, or on behalf of, His Majesty through the Governor-General in Council. We would accordingly request that, if His Majesty's Government see no objection, the necessary Order in Council may be passed providing for the exercise of jurisdiction in Bahrein.

4. But, further, in view of the increase of foreign shipping and foreign interest generally in the Gulf, and of the establishment of foreign firms and Missions in Bahrein, which has already caused practical difficulties, it seems desirable that, if possible, in maintenance of the *status quo* in the Gulf, provision should be made in the Order in Council for the exercise by the Political Agent of jurisdiction over foreigners in Bahrein, before foreign interests have so largely developed as to render the assumption of the legal duties of a Protecting Power a matter of greater intricacy and difficulty, involving, perhaps, as in the case of Zanzibar, diplomatic representations to foreign Powers. Bahrein has been under sole British domination since 1820, and on several occasions we have had to interfere by armed force, either to prevent the Chief of Bahrein from attacking his neighbours, or them from attacking him, or to settle matters relating to the Chiefship. In 1880, by a Treaty published for public information, the Sheikh bound himself to abstain from making Treaties of any sort with any State or Government other than the British, and to refuse to permit other Powers to establish Diplomatic or Consular Agencies or coaling depôts without the consent of the British Government. This Treaty in itself constituted a sort of Protectorate, which has perhaps been ripened into maturity by the open and regular exercise of Protectorate Powers, more especially in the recent cases of attacks on Persian and German subjects in Bahrein. We understand that France, Germany, and America have all received informal notice of the existence of a British Protectorate over Bahrein, and that this has recently been announced formally to the Powers most directly concerned—Turkey and Persia. In this connection we would refer also to the arguments adduced in paragraph 7 of the draft letter to the

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, which formed an inclosure to our Secret despatch dated the 14th September, 1905.

5. If His Majesty's Government consider it feasible in the circumstances to assume jurisdiction over foreigners in Bahrein, we would recommend that this should be done, and also, with reference to the inclosed correspondence, that the Order in Council should, if possible, be so framed as to enable the Political Agent to perform the functions of a notary public.

We have, &c.
(Signed) MINTO.
H. ERLE RICHARDS.
E. N. BAKER.
C. H. SCOTT.
H. ADAMSON.
J. F. FINLAY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 35.

Lieutenant-Colonel Meade to Government of India.

Bushire, August 14, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, a copy of a telegram which I have received from Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, regarding the status of the Islands of Bahrein, and of my reply thereto.

2. I trust that the Government of India will consider my reply as correct, but, if not, I would request that I may be furnished with further instructions on the subject.

3. The Lingah case mentioned by Sir H. M. Durand is one in which a French protégé of Persian nationality is unjustly preferring a claim against the widow of a Bahrein subject who has long enjoyed the protection of this Residency, and who is herself the daughter of an emancipated slave. The case was referred to Her Majesty's Legation in consequence of certain charges of misconduct which the French Vice-Consul at Bushire has made against the Residency Agent at Lingah, rendering it impossible for me to dispose of it without such reference.

Inclosure 4 in No. 35.

Sir M. Durand to Lieutenant-Colonel Meade.

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, July* 19, 1899.

FRENCH Minister asks me whether you protect natives of Bahrein residing in ports of the Persian Gulf—are such persons within our Indian protectorate, and therefore subject to our Consular jurisdiction? Please give me material for exact reply. The question is no doubt asked with reference to Lingah case.

Inclosure 5 in No. 35.

Lieutenant-Colonel Meade to Sir M. Durand.

(Telegraphic.) *Bushire, July* 29, 1899.

YOUR Excellency's telegram of the 19th instant.

In December 1893 Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople that the Chief of Bahrein was under British protection, which would also be extended to his subjects whenever there may be occasion for it. In September 1894 the order to extend protection was repeated by India Office to Government of India. The Sheikh has been precluded by Treaty since 1880 from having political relations with any other foreign Power than the British.

Inclosure 6 in No. 35.

Government of India to Lieutenant-Colonel Meade.

Simla, September 2, 1899.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 14th August last, forwarding a copy of correspondence with Her Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran on the subject of the status of Bahrein.

2. The answer given by you was correct.

Inclosure 7 in No. 35.

Lieutenant-Colonel Kemball to Government of India.

Bushire, January 16, 1902.

THE Assistant Political Agent at Bahrein reports that during the year 1901 he has been requested by masters of merchant-vessels to issue bills of health on four occasions and also to note five marine protests; he has also been applied to for one passport and also to legalize nineteen signatures on behalf of British Indian subjects. He reports that the fees leviable for the services thus rendered would have amounted to 8*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, according to the scale of Consular fees, had he possessed authority to levy such fees.

2. So far as the issue of bills of health, noting of marine protests, &c., are concerned, such acts can only be performed by officers possessing Consular rank, which the Assistant Political Agent at Bahrein does not possess, and with which, in view of the political status of Bahrein, it will probably be inconvenient to invest him. I do not, however, anticipate that much inconvenience will be experienced on this account, as the number of direct merchant-vessels calling at Bahrein is not large. The mail-steamers and most of the other merchant-vessels which call at Bahrein also visit Bushire, where application can be made for the performance of duties required under the Merchant Shipping Act. It will be better, therefore, I think, that the Assistant Political Agent should in future inform masters of merchant-vessels who make application to him that he has no authority to perform duties of a Consular nature.

3. With regard to duties of a notarial nature, such as the legalization of signatures, execution of powers of attorney, and other acts which might be required of a notary public, I think that it may be advisable that the Assistant Political Agent should be appointed by notification in the "Gazette of India," under the Negotiable Instruments Act (No. 26 of 1881), to be a notary public for the Islands of Bahrein, and authorized at the same time to levy fees to be credited to the Government of India in accordance with the scale of fees levied under the provisions of the Persian Coasts and Islands Order in Council.

4. With regard to the issue of passports, I propose to instruct the Assistant Political Agent to forward any applications which he may receive to me for disposal.

Inclosure 8 in No. 35.

Government of India to Lieutenant-Colonel Kemball.

Simla, May 6, 1902.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 16th January, 1902, requesting that the Assistant Political Agent at Bahrein may be appointed to be a notary public for the Islands of Bahrein.

2. I am to point out that "The Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881" (No. 26 of 1881), under which you propose to appoint Mr. Gaskin to be a notary public, has not been applied to Bahrein, and that there is not at present any authorized procedure by which it can be brought into general operation there. Moreover, the appointment of Mr. Gaskin to be a notary public under the Act would only constitute him a notary public for the purposes of that specific enactment, and would not authorize him, as you apparently suppose, to do such other acts as might be required of a notary public. Special provision has been made by "The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 1889" (52 Vict., cap. 10, sec. 6), for the performance of notarial acts in foreign countries by Diplomatic

and Consular officers of His Majesty, and, though the law both in England and in India recognizes certain acts of public notaries appointed by foreign authority, it is inexpedient to rely upon such authority for the appointment of a Diplomatic Officer of a class not specified in the Statute.

3. In the circumstances above explained it is a matter for consideration whether the Assistant Political Agent at Bahrein should not be invested with Consular powers which would enable him to perform the functions of a notary public by virtue of his office, and, if you think that there is sufficient justification for the grant of such powers, the Government of India will be prepared to consider any proposal which you may make to this effect.

4. The Government of India are aware that the peculiar status of Bahrein may possibly render the investment of Mr. Gaskin with Consular powers a somewhat anomalous proceeding, but they are disposed to think that no practical difficulty need be apprehended from the step, and that there may be advantages in providing for the exercise of power and jurisdiction over His Majesty's European subjects and others in Bahrein and on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf by an Order in Council similar to that which has been framed for Muscat and for the Persian coasts and islands. The Governor-General in Council will therefore be glad to be furnished with your opinion on this proposal, together with any alternative suggestions which you may have to offer.

Inclosure 9 in No. 35.

Lieutenant-Colonel Kemball to Government of India.

Shiraz, July 2, 1902.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 6th May, in which, after pointing out the impracticability of the proposal submitted by me for the investment of the Assistant Political Agent at Bahrein with certain notarial powers, you say that it is a matter for consideration whether the Assistant Political Agent should not be invested with Consular powers which would enable him to perform the functions of a notary public by virtue of his office.

2. In my opinion, considering the requirements of Bahrein and the nature of our representation there, it is not necessary nor advisable that the Assistant Political Agent should have more than Vice-Consular rank, which could, as in the case of the Vice-Consul at Bushire, be conferred on him by warrant of the Consul-General at Bushire. At present, however, the Consular jurisdiction of the Resident at Bushire does not extend beyond the Persian side of the Gulf and the islands appertaining thereto, and, although the question of Consular jurisdiction for Bahrein and the Arabian coast of the Gulf was considered at the time when the Persian Coast and Islands Order in Council was drafted—*vide* paragraph 5 of the despatch, dated the 22nd July, 1887, from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India—it is not clear to me whether at that time the issue of a separate Order in Council for that side of the Gulf was contemplated. The simplest solution of the question would be to extend the Resident's Consular jurisdiction in the required direction without the issue of a separate Order in Council. He could then issue a warrant appointing Mr. Gaskin to be Vice-Consul at Bahrein. Mr. Gaskin would thus be enabled by virtue of his office to perform the functions of a notary public, and the powers conferred upon him would, for all the present practical requirements of Bahrein, be ample. If, however, a separate Order in Council is required, it should, I think, be framed with a view to extend the Resident's Consular jurisdiction and not to create a separate and independent Consular appointment as at Muscat.

3. At the same time, I am inclined to doubt whether the requirements of the case justify the issue of a separate Order in Council to provide for Consular jurisdiction at Bahrein and the other places in the Gulf not already provided for by Orders in Council. The Assistant Political Agent is already invested with magisterial powers in criminal cases over British Indian subjects, and there are at present no European British subjects at Bahrein. The want, therefore, of Consular jurisdiction has not hitherto been felt to any appreciable extent, and the object of my letter dated the 16th January was merely to suggest that notarial powers should be conferred upon the Assistant Political Agent so as to enable him to perform certain notarial functions and levy fees for so doing. As a matter of fact, Courts in India are not, I think, likely to dispute the validity of the Assistant Political Agent's attestation of documents, and the question of the levy of fees

is not of much importance. If, therefore, a separate Order in Council is required to invest the Assistant Political Agent with Consular rank, I am disposed to think that there is at present no sufficient justification for the measure.

4. In connection with the extension of Consular jurisdiction to Bahrein, it is, I think, necessary to bear in mind that, although we have an agreement with the Chief of Bahrein whereby foreign Consular Agencies cannot be established in Bahrein without the consent of the British Government, it may perhaps be inconvenient to maintain this position in the event of British Consular jurisdiction being extended to Bahrein. The German Consul at Bushire informed me once in course of conversation that he considered his jurisdiction in the Gulf to extend wherever mine did, and I think he said that his instructions from his Government were to this effect. This point has not, of course, escaped the notice of the Government of India, but I mention it so as to make my present report as complete as possible.

Inclosure 10 in No. 35.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, February 25, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to refer to Foreign Department letter, dated the 4th May, 1901, to the address of my predecessor, on the subject of the administration of justice in Bahrein in cases in which European foreigners are concerned.

The instructions conveyed in the second paragraph of the letter were duly conveyed to the Assistant Political Agent, Mr. Gaskin, for guidance, but I am not sure whether, when the question was considered on that occasion, the time-honoured arrangement under which commercial justice has hitherto been administered in Bahrein, by a permanent native Medjliss, was familiar to the Government of India; and in any case the existing position at Manama makes me think it advisable to make another reference on the subject.

2. In the first place, I may mention that at the end of October last Dr. Listemann, who had then recently taken over the duties of German Consul at Bushire, spoke to me informally on the subject of the position of German subjects in Bahrein. He began by saying that he understood from the correspondence on his records that the Residency would take exception to his addressing Sheikh Esa direct on behalf of a German subject in Bahrein. I replied in the affirmative, on the grounds that the foreign relations of the Chief were in our hands. He then went on to inquire what amount of protection we should consider it possible to afford to German subjects trading in Bahrein. I rejoined that my instructions were that we should always give European foreigners our good offices as a matter of courtesy, and that, if necessary, they should receive the same amount of protection as if they were British subjects, as had M. Bahnson at the time of the attack on him.

As regards the commercial claims of European foreigners, I expressed the opinion that in ordinary cases it would be in their interests to endeavour to get justice from the Sheikh direct in the first instance, and that if this course failed they could then ask the good offices of our Agent.

Reference was then made to the Medjliss, or Permanent Committee of respectable native merchants appointed for the settlement of commercial disputes, which is a feature of the administration of justice in Bahrein.

Dr. Listemann's idea seemed to be that the interests of European merchants might be prejudiced by being submitted to the arbitration of a purely native Tribunal. I informed him that, speaking from memory, I believed that the Medjliss in such cases usually sat at the Agency, under the supervision of the Political Agent, and that ordinarily I thought that the finding of the Medjliss would be subject to his concurrence.

On conclusion of the conversation, my colleague said that he had been asking for personal enlightenment as a new-comer, and since then I have heard no more from him on the subject in question.

3. The question of the formation and status of this Medjliss has recently been brought into some prominence in connection with the case of claims against the estate of one Seyyid Khalaf, deceased, with regard to which I have addressed the Government of India in my letter of to-day's date. Search has been made in the Bushire records for any correspondence throwing light on the origin of this Tribunal, but nothing has up to the present been found, nor does it appear that it was an arrangement introduced

specially at the instance of the Residency, nor that the Resident has hitherto exercised any revisionary powers over it. The institution seems to have been developed automatically in the days of our native Agents, and to have, up till recently, fulfilled its purpose quietly and adequately. I attach a Memorandum on the subject, compiled from some incidental references to the subject in communications received from our present Political Agent.

4. With reference to the position of foreign European merchants in Bahrein, I learn from Captain Prideaux that the four representatives of the German firm of which Herr Wönckhaus is the principal are still in the habit, when in conversation with him, of harping upon their claim to extra-territoriality in Bahrein both in regard to criminal and commercial matters.

Captain Prideaux considers, in fact, that they would definitely refuse to go before the Sheikh's Tribunals, and that if we were to say that this Medjliss with local merchants sitting on it, and the British Representative supervising the finding, is a Territorial Court, they would perhaps object even to that. If, on the other hand, we say that the Medjliss is a Court which the Protecting Power in consultation with the Chief has evolved for the settlement of disputes in which British subjects or Europeans claiming our good offices are concerned, it would seem to afford them an opening for asking us to define our position more precisely.

For present purposes I asked the Chief informally at my interview on the 14th instant to agree that, pending any further communication between us on the subject, findings come to by the Medjliss sitting at the Agency should be considered as subject to modification by the Political Agent in consultation with himself, Sheikh Esa, in the event of the European foreigner concerned not being satisfied with the settlement made by the Medjliss. I trust that, pending full consideration of the subject, the Government of India will approve of this arrangement.

5. The present position being as described in the foregoing paragraphs, the Government of India will perhaps concur with me in thinking that the question of the administration of justice in Bahrein at the present time requires to be placed on a more precise footing, both in view of the gradual influx of Europeans into the island and of the modified situation brought about by the appointment of a fully qualified gazetted officer of the superior status to represent our interests.

6. In connection with the question of the judicial position of the latter, I beg to refer to the correspondence ending with Colonel Kemball's letter addressed to the Foreign Department on the 2nd July, 1902, on the subject of the appointment of the Assistant Political Agent at Bahrein to be a notary public, and would ask that the question of the issue of an Order in Council for Bahrein may again be taken into consideration.

If it is thought necessary to give our Representative Consular status for duties in connection with merchant shipping, then perhaps the terms of his appointment in that capacity might nominally refer only to Katr and Katif, and not to Bahrein.

As regards Bahrein, it would seem most convenient that he should be appointed a Justice of Peace and endowed with the powers of a subordinate Judge with appeal to the Resident in the Persian Gulf, or with those of a district Judge in direct subordination to the High Court of Bombay.

As, however, the precise nature of the powers which it is necessary to give him, and the manner in which it should be done, is inseparable from the larger question of our own relations in regard to Bahrein, it seems advisable for me at this stage merely to commend the subject to the wise consideration of the Government of India in conjunction with the other questions affecting Bahrein which I am now reporting upon.

Inclosure 11 in No. 35.

Memorandum regarding the Bahrein Medjliss, or Permanent Native Court of Arbitration, dated February 25, 1906.

FOR the last forty-nine years or more it has been customary here, when commercial disputes have arisen between British subjects or protégés on the one hand and Bahrein subjects or persons of any other nationality on the other, for the British Agent, first native and subsequently English—to assemble a Court of Arbitration, locally called a Medjliss, formed from a body of respectable persons whose names are borne on a permanent list, for the hearing and adjudication of the case.

This practice at its origin received the assent of the Chief, and the list includes a number of the most influential Sunni, Shiah, and Hindu Indian merchants of Bahrein.

The Court has always had six permanent members and a few waiting members called in occasionally when any of the permanent members are sick or away from Bahrein.

The six permanent members at present are—

Two Bahrein subjects (one Sunni, and one Shiah).
Two Arabs of Nejd.
Two British Indian Hindoos.

When the services of the Medjliss are required it has not been the invariable custom to refer each time to the local authorities, as no person sits in the Court in a particular case whose presence is objected to by either party, and although a munshi of the Chief's does sometimes attend at the request of one party or the other for the purpose of watching the proceedings, such is not always or necessarily the case. No doubt, however, if a witness refused to attend, it would be necessary to invoke the Sheikh's assistance, but in practice this difficulty has never occurred.

The services of this Medjliss are frequently invoked for the settlement of disputes between British subjects and between parties of different nationalities, and then it assembles at the Agency unless given special permission for purposes of convenience to assemble elsewhere.

The Sheikh also refers to it occasionally cases between Bahrein subjects which he finds it inconvenient or difficult to settle off-hand himself.

The reputation of the Medjliss locally is exceedingly high, and it does not appear that the Residency has ever interfered with or quashed its decisions, which are usually in the nature of a compromise.

During the last year only one case has come under the Political Agent's notice in which the settlement of the Medjliss was not accepted without demur. In that instance the Political Agent reassembled the Court, as the objector alleged that the whole of his evidence had not been examined, and, finding the objection frivolous, confirmed the Court's decision.

The position of the Political Agent towards the Court hitherto seems to be more analogous to that of a Judge Advocate than a Court of Appeal. Where none of the litigants were British subjects or entitled to British protection he has really no *locus standi*, but yet under the peculiar circumstances of the case principles may often be involved which affect the interests of the whole community.

The litigants themselves have no right to nominate the members of the Court in their particular suit, but the interests of both parties are carefully considered in this regard, and the members selected either by the Chief, or the Political Agent, or by both in consultation, according to the varying circumstances of the case.

Inclosure 12 in No. 35.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.) *Bushire, March 4, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to submit the report called for in Foreign Department telegram dated the 1st March, together with an expression of my views as to the most convenient method of dealing with a member of the Persian community in Bahrein who has committed an offence on board a British ship in Bahrein Harbour.

2. A copy of the Political Agent's original report is inclosed. It treats of two distinct cases, with regard to the first of which a separate reference was made to the Government of India by telegraph on the 19th February. At the time I received Captain Prideaux's communication I was expecting to visit Bahrein a few days later and preferred to discuss the cases further with him before taking specific action on his report.

3. Under the older order of things the disposal of neither case would have presented much practical difficulty, but the critical vigilance of foreigners and agents of foreign Representatives at the present time makes it advisable for us to shape our procedure as far as possible on lines which will pass hostile criticism should any be offered, and I therefore treated the present cases with some caution.

Several possible solutions were discussed between the Political Agent and myself, but every one carried with it some objection either local or legal, and I came to the

conclusion that it would be best to refer both cases to higher authority on the broader issues involved, and on receipt of instructions to carry them out as far as the local conditions admitted.

I am now desired to submit a fuller report with my own views in respect of the case in which a Persian subject is concerned.

4. Primarily three alternative courses seem to admit of consideration :—

(1.) That the Political Agent should place the results of his preliminary inquiry before Sheikh Esa and let him punish the man.

From the correspondence leading up to the ultimatum which was presented to Sheikh Esa last year in connection with the attack on M. Balinson and on the Persian community respectively, I gather that we have not definitely withdrawn the Persians in Bahrein from the Sheikh's jurisdiction in ordinary matters, but have contented ourselves with asserting our right to interfere when necessary to save them or any other persons not subjects of the Sheikh from oppression. If this be the correct view, there would be no primary objection to course (1). On the other hand, there are attendant difficulties which Captain Prideaux mentions in paragraph 6 of his letter, and it is, moreover, probable that, if the Persian were handed over to Sheikh Esa without any definite pronouncement of our decision in regard to the exercise of jurisdiction over Persians generally, the remainder of the Persian community would take alarm at this course and report the matter to their Government.

(2.) The Persian might be forwarded to the Bushire Residency with a statement of the case, and might be handed over to the local Persian authorities at Bushire for disposal.

The Political Agent is averse to this course if it can be avoided, for the reasons stated by him. Apart from the latter, the procedure has to be considered in its bearing upon the discussion which is now progressing between the Representatives of the British and Persian Governments in Tehran or London, and it seems chiefly a question for the consideration of His Majesty's Government as to whether this course would inconvenience them in any way. It would in any case be an indirect pronouncement to the effect that Persians were withdrawn altogether from the jurisdiction of the Sheikh of Bahrein, and also were not justiciable in criminal matters by the British Representative; and such a ruling would embrace the case of all foreigners in Bahrein.

(3.) The Political Agent might ask the prisoner if he consents to submit to his jurisdiction, and if he does he might be forthwith sentenced and punished under the Political Agent's supervision.

The objection to this is that the mere asking of the question would put the idea into the man's head that there was some doubt as to our right to deal with him, and if he were subsequently aggrieved by the sentence inflicted on him it would probably occur to him or some of his relations to complain to Bushire. Moreover, the local authorities here have agents in Bahrein who report everything to them which passes. There are hardly sufficient grounds for treating him as a British employé.

5. Of the three courses above suggested the last commends itself to me most, but on the whole I am inclined to advise that the man be detained by the Political Agent for some little time longer under present conditions, and be then expelled from Bahrein territory conjointly by the Political Agent and the Sheikh in consultation. His previous history would certainly deter him from drawing attention to himself in Persia. I admit that this would not be an entirely satisfactory solution from a Bahrein point of view, as the man might be considered to have got off too easily, but the adoption of this alternative possesses none of the potential disadvantages attaching to the previous ones, and before another similar case were likely to arise Government would have time to give deliberate consideration to the question of the future treatment of Persians and foreigners in Bahrein and the judicial powers with which it is advisable to equip our Agent.

6. In considering the cases under report I have studied Hall's "Foreign Jurisdiction of the British Crown," to which I would invite reference, but have not found in it anything very helpful to a decision in regard to the present cases except in a negative way. It is clear, however, that the powers of our Political Agent need

putting on a more satisfactory basis than they are at present, and I have addressed the Government of India on this subject in a recent communication of the 25th February, 1906.

Inclosure 13 in No. 35.

Captain Prideaux to Major Cox.

Bahrein, January 26, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that there are now under detention in this Agency twelve persons who have been charged with criminal offences—eleven with having dishonestly sold a portion of the property under their custody (to wit, the cargo of an Indian sailing-boat) at an intermediate port instead of delivering it to the rightful consignee at Bahrein, and one with having committed a serious theft on board a British mail-steamer in the full view of some six or seven coolies and in the belief that his position of authority over them would preserve him from all unpleasant consequences.

2. All these prisoners, after hearing the evidence of the prosecution in their respective cases, have voluntarily confessed their guilt. It only remains, therefore, if Government concur in the recommendations contained in this letter, for me to issue the judgments and sentences.

3. Before doing this, however, I think that it is necessary for me to submit the following observations on the general position in such criminal cases within my political jurisdiction, and also briefly to invite attention to the points in which the two cases that have arisen differ from each other.

4. In the sailing-boat case, though the vessel is registered in India and the owner is a British subject, the crew are all inhabitants of Gwadar, and presumably therefore subjects of Muscat; they are Baluchis in nationality. The consignee is a Bahrein subject, and the offence was first brought to my cognizance by the Chief of Bahrein, who formally requested me to deal with it. I do not propose to sentence the accused to a term of more than six months' imprisonment, and as arrangements can be easily made for the enforcement of this punishment with hard but useful and productive labour in Bahrein, I venture to express the opinion that no considerations of any special intricacy affect this case.

5. In the other case the circumstances are more serious. The offender is a Persian, who is proved to possess a very bad character, but who has apparently been allowed employment on board the British India Steam Navigation Company's steamers on account of his influence over the class from which the coolies are drawn, this influence being due to his reputation for cruelty and general wickedness during a period of service as Ferrash-bashi and executioner under the Deputy Governor of Lingah.

In an endeavour to involve in his own misfortune the permanent servant of the Steamer Company whose office was immediately to supervise him, this individual has confessed to having committed not only the offence of which he is accused, but also of having habitually pilfered cargo. At the same time he has most successfully concealed the 300 rupees now stolen. I am of opinion that this man's punishment cannot be adequately fixed at less than two years' rigorous imprisonment. He is said to be practically impervious to the effect of floggings and hot-iron firings, which punishments he was made acquainted with in his own person, before he fled from Persia, so that if his present offence had been committed in that country there is not much doubt that he would now be condemned, by any but a friendly Judge, to suffer the loss of his right hand.

6. The Government of Bahrein have no arrangements for keeping convicts in durance for any but the shortest periods. In this particular case, too, the Sheikh would doubtless object if he were asked to feed and imprison a foreigner who had committed a crime on board a vessel in his waters certainly, but claiming extra-territoriality against him.

Were the offence sufficiently unimportant as to merit only a few months' imprisonment, the difficulty could perhaps be evaded by the constitution of a Court composed of myself and a representative of the Chief, as is customarily done when an accused is a Bahrein subject or a foreigner who prefers not to invoke British good offices and the other party is a British or foreign subject who does.

7. Nor does it seem desirable that the trial of the accused should be informally completed by me, and that he should then be made over to the Persian authorities to

undergo such sentence as they may be capriciously pleased to enforce upon him. It is possible that in such circumstances he might suffer a no more worse punishment than imprisonment until the Mahommedan New Year's Day, but, on the other hand, as a refugee from Persia, and more particularly if he is a fugitive from the jurisdiction of the present Governor of the Gulf ports, his treatment might be worse than the Government of India would care to contemplate.

8. It seems to me that such a case as this may occur again. Moreover, there are a number of foreigners, such as native Christians, in the islands in regard to whom a sentence of a long term of imprisonment here or even the trial of a capital charge would be impossible.

9. Under Foreign Department Notification dated the 22nd March, 1901, communicated to my predecessor under your Office indorsement dated the 20th April, 1901, the Assistant Political Agent at Bahrein was granted the powers of a Magistrate of the First Class in respect of offences committed by native Indian subjects of His Majesty.

This seems to be the only enactment dealing with this subject affecting Bahrein, as "The Persian Coast and Islands Order in Council, 1889," so far as I understand, applies only to "that portion of the coasts and islands of the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman which is within the dominions of His Majesty the Shah of Persia." No Sessions Court nor higher Appellate Court have been yet indicated, nor have I any instructions as to whether in serious cases I am permitted to commit convicts to a gaol in British India. I submit that the time is now ripe for a decision on all these points, and, further, I would beg to be granted the powers of a Justice of the Peace, as is almost invariably done, I believe, in India in the case of European First Class Magistrates.

10. In conclusion, I would be glad to receive instructions on the subject of dieting under-trial prisoners and short-term convicts, as also of any other expenses that may unavoidably be incurred in relation to such persons. During the past twelve months I have submitted no bills on account of the dieting of either prisoners or refugee slaves, as I have always been able to employ such people on the construction of Government buildings, and will still be able to do so for a little time longer. This method of meeting the difficulty will, however, eventually cease, and it would then appear necessary that I should be authorized to draw from some special allotment of my annual Budget grant.

[2165] No. 36.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 20.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 15th instant, relative to the Abu Musa incident.

A copy has been sent to the Director of Military Operations and to the Director of Naval Intelligence.

India Office, January 18, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 36.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, January* 15, 1908.

SITUATION at Abu Musa: You should warn Resident, Bushire, that in the negotiations here we are not maintaining objection based on creation of a monopoly.

[2544] No. 37.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 23.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 9th December, relative to the Abu Musa incident.

India Office, January 22, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 37.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, December 13, 1907.

Telegraphic.) P.

QUESTION of Abu Musa Island.

The concessionnaires, accompanied by the Dragoman of the German Consulate left Bushire by mail of the 22nd November, and proceeded to Shargah. The Sheikh of Shargah has now sent me the originals of two official letters, dated the 19th November, addressed to him and his uncle, Sheikh Salim, respectively, by German Consul at Bushire, and presented on the 28th November by above-mentioned individual.

The letters refuse to accept the cancellation of lease. They protest against the Sheikh's proceedings and threaten, if permission to ship oxide not given, to claim 1,00,000 rupees. Seeing that you were approached on the 10th November by the German Minister, I think we should take strong exception to the action of the German Consul here in attempting to bluff Sheikh, who is under British protection, by a direct communication of the nature explained. If you concur, please state whether I am to enter into communication with German Consul here or whether matter will be dealt with in Tehran.

No reply to letters has been vouchsafed by Sheikh, and hitherto question of Abu Musa Island has not been broached between the German Consul and myself.

(Addressed Tehran, and repeated to Foreign with Viceroy and Foreign, Calcutta.)

Inclosure 2 in No. 37.

Mr. Marling to Government of India.

Tehran, December 14, 1907.

(Telegraphic.) P.

ABU MUSA.

Following sent to Foreign Office:—

[Repeats Mr. Marling's No. 379, 14th December, 1907.]

(Repeated to Viceroy's Camp.)

[2513] No. 38.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 23.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 20th January, relative to the situation at Abu Musa.

A copy has been sent to the Director of Military Operations and to the Director of Naval Intelligence.

India Office, January 22, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 38.

Mr. Morley to the Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, January* 20, 1908.

ABU MUSA. Your telegram dated the 15th January, 1908.

If Wönckhaus revives idea of removing oxide, it would be undesirable for British official to proceed by German vessel. In these circumstances there is no objection to gun-boat being used.

[1428] No. 39.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 23, 1908.

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 7th instant respecting the Suklawiya Canal between the Tigris and Euphrates, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit herein copy of a despatch from Sir N. O'Conor on the subject.*

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that it would be well for Messrs. Pearson to be informed of the possibilities in connection with this canal which exist for the contractor who secures the contract for the Hindié Barrage.

Sir E. Grey thinks that M. Cugnin's plans should not be shown to Messrs. Pearson, though they might be informed that such plans exist.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[2889] No. 40.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 25.)

Sir, *Pera, January* 17, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 760 of the 10th December, 1907, I have the honour to report that I have continued to urge strongly on the Porte the imperative necessity of adopting remedial measures for the alleviation of the condition of the Armenians in the Bitlis Vilayet, especially in the Mush district.

In face of the long-established and rooted policy of the Palace of gradually eliminating by furtive and intangible methods the Armenian element in these regions, the Porte, even when well intentioned, is unable to do anything of a lasting and efficacious nature to better the lot of the Armenians.

During the last two months the Grand Vizier while contending against the baneful influence of the Palace has been corresponding with the provincial authorities with a view of having put into effect some of the ameliorations suggested by me, and a despatch received from Mr. Vice-Consul Heard on his return to Bitlis reports the results of his Highness' endeavours. These results, as indeed is only to be expected, are but qualified and partial. While the Grand Vizier's instructions seem to have reached the local authorities, the sinister influence of the Palace and the local conditions, which are the outcome of its policy in the past, render their effect fleeting or nugatory. The massacres of 1896–7 and the grinding tyranny of which the Armenians have been the victims during the succeeding decade have reduced them to a state of utter destitution. The Kurds, who are mostly a non-productive and non-economic element accustomed to prey on the Armenians, are unable or unwilling to pay the Government taxes. The pressing needs of a depleted central and provincial treasury necessitate the raising of funds to meet the indispensable requirements of the civil and military administration, and the local authorities, chary of demanding their share from the Palace-favoured Kurds, attempt to extract the whole amount required from the impoverished Armenians, this tax-collection from the Christian villages being almost invariably accompanied by cruel oppression.

Mr. Heard reports that relative tranquillity prevails at Mush, that the Mutessarif of that district has received orders not to press the Armenians unduly for taxes, and

* No. 28.

that some six tax-gatherers have been dismissed, but one or two of the latter have since managed to get reinstated, taxes are still being wrung from half-starving Armenians and the tranquillity is only "relative." Owing to my complaints of excessive overcrowding in the Mush prison, the Mutessarif has, on orders from the Grand Vizier, hired a caravanserai to which some seventy prisoners have been removed, but the old prison is still overcrowded and, judging by Western standards, its sanitary condition is deplorable. The overcrowding was partly due to the congested state of the local Law Courts and, at my suggestion, the Grand Vizier had a Judicial Inspector sent to Mush with a view to working off arrears; but as most of the charges were for "political sedition" requiring reference to Constantinople, the Inspector's mission did not produce the results anticipated.

Again I have urged on the Grand Vizier the necessity of mitigating the abuses of "selef" or "selem," a system of usury by which the already hopelessly indebted Armenian villagers mortgage their crops before they are grown and their lambs before they are born, and, on his Highness' instructions, the Mutessarif has forbidden the collection of the exorbitant interest of "selem," but the "selemdars" or usurers have proved too powerful, and the Armenian peasants are reported to be still borrowing from them.

The Government has offered to distribute, through the Agricultural Bank, some thousands of pounds' worth of seed corn, but at 6 to 8 per cent. interest, to be mutually guaranteed by the villagers. The latter, who have an ingrained distrust of dealing with Government, and suspect, probably with reason, that the ultimate result of the operation will be the acquisition of their remaining lands by the Agricultural Bank, are showing little eagerness to accept the proferred "boon."

In consequence of the Grand Vizier's instructions, the Acting Vali of Bitlis, Mr. Heard reports, has sent a long report embodying suggestions for ameliorating the state of the province. They are mainly the following :—

1. *Tithes.*—A Commission to introduce a new system experimentally. The Acting Vali deprecates a five years' average principle, which he says is not equitable, owing to the reduced population of many villages; and he lays stress on the fact that, owing to powerful protection, Kurds do not pay anything like their proper quota.

2. *Cadastral Inquiry* by a Commission to study title-deeds and restore property illegally held.

3. "*Selem.*"—The Agricultural Bank to issue small loans to needy persons on the security of the Village Councils, thus obviating the necessity of having recourse to "selemdars."

4. *Taxes.*—A Commission to study the question of arrears and remit those due by the destitute, all names of emigrants and permanent absentees being also struck off the tax roll.

5. *Justice.*—An additional Magistrate to be appointed to Mush, the members of the Court being chosen from qualified officials, and not from the local population.

6. *Public Order.*—Troops to be under the orders of the Vali, who should have power to employ them against lawless Kurds; population to be disarmed, and the Hamidiehs to be subject to the ordinary Civil Courts.

I am urging on the Porte the adoption of most of these suggestions, especially the last, as any serious decision of the Central Government to curb the lawlessness of the Hamidieh or tribal Kurds would go a long way towards securing tolerable conditions of existence for the Armenians.

As you are aware, the tribal Kurds were many years ago organized into the Hamidieh irregular cavalry regiments as a counterpoise to the Russian Cossacks in the event of aggression from the north. They have been specially pampered and favoured by the Sultan, who has connived at their freebooting tendencies, thus causing untold misery to the Armenians.

Events in the Far East have diminished the reputation of the Cossacks and the Sultan's dread of attack from the direction of the Caucasus, and I have impressed on the Porte the necessity of restraining the predatory activity of the Hamidieh, who have recently shown signs of getting out of hand, with consequences possibly fraught with danger to Turkish rule in the eastern provinces of Asia Minor.

In my despatch No. 760 I had the honour of reporting military action taken against the Kurds of Dersim. The Turks have also attacked and shelled the strongholds of two recalcitrant chieftains in the Bitlis district, while Mr. Heard reports the arrest of some twenty Kurds, including a Major and Captain of Hamidieh. The

Grand Vizier has just informed me that five Kurdish Hamidieh Chiefs have been deported to Erzeroum, and that steps are being taken to remove similarly to Erzinjan another six, including the notorious Riza Bey of Kesmi, in the district of Bulanik.

These are but half-measures, but they will have a certain deterrent effect on other unruly Kurds, and afford a corresponding relief to the Armenians oppressed by them. The Grand Vizier further informs me, confidentially, that he has been endeavouring to persuade the Sultan to remove Zekki Pasha, the present Commandant of the IVth Army Corps, a Palace favourite, who has been mainly instrumental in shielding the Hamidieh against the civil authorities when the latter have felt compelled to check the predatory instincts of these tribal Kurds. I cannot, however, feel sanguine as to his chances of success, as it would imply an admission by the Sultan that his past policy had been responsible for the disorders and misrule in those provinces.

While making as earnest and energetic representations as possible, I have thought it advisable to avoid presenting them in official and written form, as past experience has shown that, in the absence of coercive measures, any official intervention on behalf of the Armenians has done them more harm than good, arousing as it does the suspicions of the Sultan's Government and driving it ultimately to visit its resentment on the heads of the victims of oppression whom it is intended to succour.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S. *January* 18.—Since writing the foregoing I have to-day received your despatch No. 6 of the 10th January, summarizing the salient facts reported by His Majesty's Consular officers in Armenia during the last twelve months, and conveying your instructions to—

1. Impress on the Grand Vizier the folly of pursuing a policy of foreign encroachment on the borders of provinces where the resources are impoverished and the population disaffected.

2. To point out to his Highness the urgent need of measures of relief which will really reach the actual sufferers and enable them to tide over the winter months, with a view to their becoming self-supporting in the coming year.

3. To insist on the definite remission of taxation, the abolition of collective responsibility, and protection against oppression and extortion in the collection of taxes.

4. To press for an improvement in the prison at Mush and the early liberation of prisoners detained merely as suspects.

5. To emphasize the importance of appointing honest and efficient Kaïmakams.

6. To furnish a report on the expediency of relaxing the restrictions against foreign emigration; and

7. To report on the extent to which practical effect has been given to the injunctions of the Grand Vizier.

Most of the above points have been dealt with in this despatch. As regards relaxing the restrictions against foreign emigration, individual Armenians, families, or small groups who can show that the Government have no claims against them for taxes, &c., may be permitted to leave the country on the condition of never returning to the Ottoman dominions; but it would be well-nigh impossible to obtain the Sultan's sanction to their emigration wholesale or in large bodies, such a course being incompatible with the rigidly maintained fiction of a paternal autocracy, which ceaselessly watches over the welfare of all classes of its subjects without distinction of race or creed.

Again, I fear that any efforts to obtain the appointment of honest and efficient Kaïmakams would be of very small avail as long as the spirit breathed by the central authority into the whole Administration of these provinces, including Valis and Mutessarifs, is such as I have described it.

I have repeatedly, in the course of my representations concerning the Persian boundary, pointed out the futility of, and the complications likely to result from, a policy of adventuresome aggression in the vicinity of provinces where administrative chaos and internal disorders of a revolutionary character prevail; but I fear the Sultan's Government calculate that such foreign encroachments will create a diversion and act as an antidote to the discontent which has been finding vent in outbreaks directed against its misrule.

It is, I think, unnecessary to develop the idea alluded to in the concluding paragraph of my despatch, but it would seem that we must be satisfied with half-measures unless the Governments interested in the fate of the Armenians are able and willing to use the only argument that will deflect the Sultan from his settled policy—*i.e.*, the argument of force persistently and effectively applied.

N. R. O'C.

[2894] No. 41.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 30.)

Sir, *Pera, January 21, 1908.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 507 of the 17th December, in which you request me to demand from the Porte that a formal apology be made by the offending officials to the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" for the discourtesy shown to him at El Katif, and suggesting the desirability of the Vali of Bussorah being instructed to furnish an open letter to Lieutenant-Commander Gouldsmith containing peremptory orders to the El Katif officials to proceed on board His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" at an hour and date convenient to the Officer in Command and tender a formal apology, both in writing and in person, for their previous misconduct.

In reply I have the honour to report that, on instructions received as the result of my note to the Porte of the 19th August, the Vali of Bussorah, while expressing his keen regret for the incident, informed His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah that there was no Kaimakam at El Katif at the time, the post being in charge of a certain Avni Effendi, whom he had removed. The Vali states that from his inquiries it appeared that the Captain of the port was chiefly to blame in the matter, and that he had been suspended for three months. On the receipt of further instructions from the Minister of the Interior, the Vali has now written officially to His Majesty's Consul and informed him that instructions in writing have been sent to the present Kaimakam of El Katif to tender a formal apology to the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" on his next visit for the discourtesy shown to him during the time of his acting predecessor.

I see that His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" has now proceeded to Bombay, and, presumably, may not visit El Katif for some time, but the Minister of the Interior informs me that his instructions are such that, if we think it desirable, the Kaimakam will make the apology to the Commander of any other of His Majesty's ships that may call there in the meantime.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[1994] No. 42.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 30, 1908.*

WITH reference to my letter of the 8th instant, respecting the recent difficulties in connection with the red oxide mines at Abu Musa, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit herewith, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, copy of a despatch on the subject from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* reporting his action in the matter, and forwarding copies of correspondence with the German Legation.

It will be seen that in the Memorandum which Mr. Marling addressed to the German Chargé d'Affaires on the 15th November, he stated that the privilege of extracting oxide from Abu Musa had been leased on a year's basis by the Sheikh of Shargah to a Syndicate of three British subjects.

I am to inquire whether Mr. Morley can suggest any explanation of this statement, as in the copy of the contract which was communicated by the India Office to this Department no term was mentioned.

Subject to Mr. Morley's concurrence, Sir E. Grey proposes to approve Mr. Marling's action as reported in his despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

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* No. 33.

[3324] No. 41*.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 24.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 27, 1908.*

COUNT BENCKENDORFF read to me to-day the information contained in the accompanying Memorandum, which the Russian Government had received, respecting the Turco-Persian frontier.

He said that M. Isvolsky was anxious so know what suggestions I could make.

I told him it was difficult for us to make any suggestions. We had supported every representation which Russia had made, and were most willing to co-operate with her. But we could not ourselves propose coercive measures. This part of the frontier was out of our reach, and if we were to take coercive measures against Turkey public opinion here would expect that we should expect some settlement of the Macedonian question as one of the results of them.

Count Benckendorff said he did not think M. Isvolsky contemplated coercive measures at the present time. But Count Benckendorff himself suggested that it might be possible to make a declaration to the Porte that we could not recognize the frontier as having been affected by these acts of aggression. He also suggested that the British and Russian Consuls might help in getting the Commission to meet, by taking part in it, and proposing a place for its meeting.

I said I was quite willing to join in anything of this kind that was likely to be of any use. We might, no doubt, make a declaration to the Porte that we considered the frontier was still to be found somewhere in the zone which had been laid down years ago, and that we could not recognize any frontier outside that zone. But anything we said would have to be couched in such terms as not to make it a humiliation for us if the Turk rejected what we put forward and we did not at once proceed to enforce it.

I impressed upon Count Benckendorff that though I did not propose any coercive measures, for the reasons I had given, I did not intend this to be construed as deprecating anything which Russia thought it necessary to do to restrain this Turkish aggression. At present this trouble affected Russia more than us, and our rôle was to support Russia. If the Turkish aggression extended south and approached the Gulf, we might have to consider what steps we should take ourselves.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

Inclosure in No. 41*.

Memorandum respecting the Turco-Persian Frontier.

D'APRÈS les télégrammes de M. Hartwig et du Consul de Russie à Tabris, l'avance des Turcs en territoire Persan continue. Les Kurdes, probablement sous instigation Turque, ont entouré Suj Bulak et ont adressé au Gouverneur d'Azerbejan, en marche sur cette ville avec des troupes, un ultimatum, portant qu'il avait à se retirer de la place immédiatement, sous menace s'il s'y refusait que Bajasit-Aga, Chef des Kurdes, aurait recours à la force. Sans moyen ultérieur de se défendre, le Gouvernement Persan s'est adressé à nous pour que les empiétements Turcs sur territoire Persan soient arrêtés.

M. Zinovieff a relevé à la Porte la contradiction entre les assurances du Gouvernement Ottoman et l'état de choses sur la frontière.

Le Ministre Ottoman des Affaires Étrangères a répondu que le Gouvernement Turc n'est nullement responsable de l'état d'ébullition parmi les Kurdes de la frontière, causée par les mesures voxatoires du Gouverneur d'Azerbejan, Firman Firma, qui a décrété l'incendie des villages Kurdes-Sunnites, mais que malgré cela le Gouvernement Ottoman ferait son possible dans le sens désiré par le Gouvernement Russe.

Quant à une localité pour la réunion des Commissaires, le Grand Vizir et le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères ont bien déclaré ne pas avoir d'objection au choix d'Urmiah; tout de même, leur réponse à ce sujet indique qu'ils préféreraient voir ce point établi par les Commissaires eux-mêmes, et qu'ils pensent que le bourg de Mevanch serait indiqué.

[3427] No. 43.

Sir A. Block to Foreign Office.—(*Received January* 31.)

My dear Hardinge, *Constantinople, January* 27, 1908.

WITH regard to the Memorandum I sent you concerning the Konia Irrigation scheme, &c., I wish to elucidate two points.

1. It would appear from my Memorandum that the area to be brought under cultivation is only 80,000 deunums. The 80,000 deunums are the area brought under cultivation by the draining of the lake of Karaviran. Besides this, it is expected that by the canalization of the rivers an area of over 500,000 deunums will be brought under cultivation, thus making in all over 580,000 deunums.

2. With regard to the advances made to the Government by the Bank, and stated to be over 50,000,000 fr. (£T. 2,200,000), I find in the last published balance-sheet of the Bank (31st August, 1907) that the Government owes them £T. 2,080,964.

But it must be borne in mind that, according to the Convention between the Bank and the Government, the former is obliged to open a credit account for the latter of £T. 1,000,000. To this I add the £T. 926,230 which the Bank has yet to receive from sums advanced on the security of revenues in the hands of the Debt. The balance, namely £T. 154,734, are other sums advanced by the Bank to the Civil List, &c., of which I know no details. But the Bank is by no means in any danger on this account, either as regards capital or interest.

First to cover the credit account of £T. 1,000,000, the Government has delivered to the Bank 50,000 bonds of the 1904 4 per cent. Loan, to the nominal value of 1,000,000*l.* At the rate of to-day this is worth £T. 1,000,000, so that the £T. 1,000,000 to the credit of the Government is fully covered.

Secondly, eventual reimbursement of the sums advanced on the security of the revenues in the hands of the Debt (ceded revenues and "revenus divers") is absolutely assured.

There only remains then £T. 154,734, the reimbursement of which may be problematical, but I imagine the Bank has no fears on this account.

Again, the advances to the Government are at 7 per cent., and the interest also is assured in the first two cases. For the £T. 1,000,000 by the annuity of £T. 108,000, which the Public Debt pays as a fixed charge on the surplus of the "revenus divers."

This £T. 108,000 is applied as follows:—

	£T.
Interest, 7 per cent. on £T. 1,000,000	70,000
Annual subvention paid by Government to bank for the maintenance of Agencies	82,000
	152,000
Less the coupon on the 50,000 bonds of the 1904 loan above mentioned in the hands of the Bank, namely	44,000
Total	108,000

and for the sums advanced on the security of revenues, in the hands of the Debt, there is no fear of the interest not forthcoming.

The Bank then appears to me to be in a sound position, both as regards capital and interest, of at any rate £T. 1,926,230 of its advances, and for the small remainder I am sure the Bank is fully secure.

From the above, when it is remembered that 7 per cent. is the interest paid by the Government, it is clear that the Bank is doing a profitable business with the Government, and the greater part of its advances may be considered as a very fair investment of a large portion of its paid-up share capital. It is not risking much.

I am, &c.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

[3709] No. 44.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 28, 1908.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 634 of the 1st October, 1907, I have the honour to forward herewith Memorandum from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, in which he records the friendly attitude of the Nakib on the question of his house.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 44.

Memorandum by Consul-General Ramsay.

(No. 13. Confidential.)

1. *The Nakib of Bagdad.*—I have had a long interview with the Nakib. The meeting was arranged at the house which he has built near the Residency. No one was present except my dragoman. The Nakib is commonly represented as a fanatical person of little intelligence, who would consider himself defiled by the touch of a Christian. He, however, received me with the most friendly grip of the hand, and nothing could exceed his politeness. He told a long history about the house he has built, and assured me that he had not been actuated by any unfriendly motive; he said that his house and the Residency had been begun about the same time, and that he had no idea that he was doing anything disagreeable to the British Resident. He then explained his objections to carrying out the proposals of Colonel Newmarch, and said that his family had for many years been on good terms with the British Representative, and that he wished to live up to the traditions he had inherited. I then stated our side of the case as it is found in the records of this office, and after some discussion it was agreed that we should attempt to reach some agreement based on a mutual desire to oblige, and not upon rights and obligations. Finally, the Nakib asked me what I wanted. I had carefully considered the terms that I should have suggested if I had been an arbitrator and not a party to the matter, and the Nakib accepted the terms which I proposed. I was interested to see how anxious he was to save the feelings of the Wali and after many methods of the procedure had been suggested, it was arranged that I should write to the Wali stating my proposals, and asking him to use his powerful influence with the Nakib to get the matter settled according to those terms. The Nakib is to see the draft before it goes to the Wali, so that there may be no room for misunderstanding. I hope there will be no hitch. The Nakib said that of course he could not appear as an intimate friend of mine, but that he hoped we should be friends nevertheless; he then said that the British commerce was greater than that of all the other nations, and that he wished to see it increase. He said that he was thinking of importing pumping machinery and that he hoped his example might be of value. As I was taking my leave he reiterated his wish to be on friendly terms with the English, and he added, which I thought remarkable, "If you are ever really in want of information, there is no one who is in a better position to give it you than I am." I am inclined to think that the Nakib meant what he said, because these speeches were made after the question of the house had been closed, and not when he wanted to get something out of me.

I cannot be surprised that the Turkish Government is suspicious of the English in Mesopotamia, for it seems to be firmly rooted in public opinion that we are going to be the dominant Power here before long. No doubt it was some feeling of this kind that made the Nakib so friendly.

2. *Pir Abdul Salam, Brother of the Nakib.*—This man has recently returned from Quetta, and is the full brother of Sayad Hassan, who is in Cabul. The Nakib does not approve of the visits of these two brothers to India and Afghanistan, as they obtain money which might otherwise come to him. I hear that Sayad Hassan is not allowed to receive any letters which are not censored by the Ameer. Pir Abdul Salam used to stay for months at Kila Abdulla, in the Quetta district, where he was known as the Bagdad Pir, and where he was getting a large following. Here he comes to call on me and shows me the utmost respect, but in Baluchistan he is too holy a man to have anything to do with the Kafirs. I rather chaffed him about this, and he said that the only reason he did not call on any of the Sahibs was that he did not know any of them.

I think I will give him a letter of introduction to Sir Henry McMahon the next time he goes to Baluchistan. He is the son of a Circassian, and appears to me a man of very limited intelligence. Still, he is one of the Kadiri family, and as such has considerable influence. During his recent visit to Quetta, he tells me that he received many presents of landed property at Quetta, Mastung, Khezai, and Mandokhel. One of the people who gave him a lot of property was Sirdar Nauroz Khan, of Kharan. I seem to recollect a dispute between Sirdar Nauroz Khan and the Mastauphi family, of Kelat, about landed property, and I am inclined to think that it is this disputed property which has been given to Pir Abdul Salam.

3. *The Persian Frontier.*—In my diary of this week I have mentioned rumours of troops being put along the frontier from Fao to Wazna. My informant was the man in charge of the local Foreign Office, but the denial that the 4th Army Corps was to be brought south came from the Commander-in-chief, through a perfectly trustworthy informant. From the conversation of the Quarantine Inspector, I should not be surprised if the Board of Health had been asking for further troops on the frontier to support their employés.

There is no doubt that all along the frontier the condition is very disturbed. I understand that parties of less that twenty or thirty men dare not pass between the Turkish frontier towns, and that the country between Kut-el-Amara and Badra is not at all safe. The exigencies of the Quarantine Department do not in my opinion justify such an aggressive move as the strengthening of all the frontier garrisons. Such a move would have a most disturbing effect on the country, for the large majority of the population are Shiahs, while on the Persian side of the frontier there is the powerful tribe of Hussein Kuli Khan, of Pushti Kuh, who has already made one successful attack on Turkish troops near Mendeli. Further, Sheikh Gudban, of the Beni Lam, is said to be not very sure of his position under the Turks, and he is married to the daughter of Hussein Kuli Khan. The Beni Lam is not far from the Muntafic country, and altogether the place is remarkably ill-chosen for a demonstration which is not in much greater force than the Turks are likely to have. The eventual settlement of the frontier will be much easier if raids and counter-raids are not encouraged by ill-advised activity.

(Signed) J. RAMSAY, *Officiating Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, and His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad.*

Bagdad, December 23, 1907.

[3711] No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 44. Confidential.)
Sir, *Pera, January 28, 1908.*

I HAVE the honour to report that a contract was signed on the 25th ultimo between the Anatolian Railway Company and the Minister of Public Works authorizing the doubling of the Company's present capital, thus raising it to 135,000,000 fr. The whole of the new shares are to be taken up by the Deutsche Bank, which is to pay a first call of 10 per cent. immediately, and undertakes to pay further calls as required by the Company.

The money is required for the execution of two Concessions recently obtained by the Anatolian Railway Company, viz.: the irrigation of the Konia Plain at a cost of 19,000,000 fr., and the doubling of the line from Haidar Pasha to Pendik at a cost not to exceed £T. 100,000.

I transmit herewith the Conventions relating to these two Concessions, as well as a confidential Memorandum on this development of German enterprise in Asia Minor, which Sir Adam Block has forwarded to the Council of Foreign Bondholders in London. It will be noticed that the details of the irrigation scheme differ materially from those previously reported by this Embassy.

At the close of his interesting Memorandum Sir A. Block refers to an advance of £T. 240,000 which has recently been made to the Turkish Government by the Anatolian Railway Company, £T. 200,000 of which is secured on the Government's share of the surplus of the ceded revenues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No 45.

Memorandum.

THREE matters of paramount interest to the country and to German enterprise and finance have recently occurred, concerning which I have deemed it necessary to obtain information, and which I propose to treat seriatim in this Memorandum. They are:—

1. The irrigation of the Plain of Konia.
2. The doubling of the line from Haidar Pasha to Pendik.
3. The doubling of the nominal share capital of the Anatolian Railway Company.

1. I annex copy of the Convention between the Ministry of Finance and the Director-General of the Anatolian Railway regarding the irrigation of the Plain of Konia. From the perusal of this Convention it will be seen that works will be undertaken for the canalization of the waters of the Lake of Bey Chehir and the Rivers of Bey Chehir and Tcharchambar Tchai, and for the draining of the Lake of Karaviran; 580,000 deunms (about 130,000 acres) of land will be brought under cultivation.

The work will be begun in March, and completed in six years. The total cost is 19,500,000 fr., to be advanced by the Railway Company. This sum will be repaid in thirty-five years from the date of conclusion of the works; the interest is at 5 per cent.

The security is (1) £T. 25,000 per annum paid by the Council of the Debt from the surplus of the "revenus divers"; (2) the surplus of the tithes revenue of the lands brought under cultivation over and above the average revenue of the last five years; (3) the net receipts from the irrigation works; (4) the net receipts of the drained and irrigated lands, to be put up to sale for the establishment of Mussulman villages, independently of lands reserved for Mussulman immigrants; and, lastly, in case of insufficiency the Government will provide other security.

The above are in résumé the chief points of the Convention.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the result will be beneficial to the country. The area of cultivation to be drained and irrigated is expected to become most fertile. The tithes will increase, population will be attracted thither, and the Railway Company will benefit by a large increase in the traffic receipts.

It is essential, however, that the class of peasant to cultivate the lands in question should be the industrious class. Mussulmans from Asia Minor, settled in lands where the harvest one year in three can be expected to give a satisfactory return, will flock to the area now to be irrigated, and if the Government will refrain from establishing on the plain Circassians or Bosnians, who are averse to settled and continuous agricultural labour, and will establish the laborious and hard-working Moslems from Roumelia, Bulgaria, or Bessarabia, the success of the undertaking is assured.

2. I inclose a copy of the Additional Convention of the Anatolian Railway Concession of the 22nd September, 1304 (1889), regarding the doubling of the line to Pendik. The work will be executed in eighteen months after the approval of the plans.

The cost is not to exceed £T. 100,000, and will bear interest at 5 per cent. This sum, with interest, will be repaid by the Government.

The average receipts for the section for ten years will be established, and the increase in gross receipts over and above this sum will not be passed into the receipts of the Haidar-Pasha Ismidt line, but will be devoted to interest and sinking fund of the construction capital to be advanced by the Anatolian Railway Company.

Only when the capital is amortized will the increased receipts be passed into the general receipts of the line, and thus reduce the kilometric guarantee.

In other words, the Government will pay for the double line, and the advantage will only be reaped when the cost is amortized.*

3. The decision to double the share capital of the Anatolian Railway Company was taken at a general meeting on the 28th June, 1907.

* Until the capital is amortized the amount of the kilometric guarantees to be paid by the Government from the tithes collected by the Debt Council will be greater than it is to-day (say, by £T. 9,000 a-year), since the average receipts of ten years are less than what they now are by about that amount.

On the other hand, according to Article 8 the Company will reimburse the £T. 100,000, when the gross receipts of the section to Angora attain 30,000 fr. per kilom.; but when will that be?

This decision was sanctioned by Imperial Iradé, and entails a modification of Article 6 of the Statutes. The words "de moitié" are replaced by the words "jusqu'à concurrence de 135,000,000 fr."

Article 6 of the Statutes is as follows:—"Le fonds social est composé du capital à actions ci-après déterminé et des obligations à émettre selon le coût des travaux des lignes. Le capital à actions est fixé à 1,800,000*l.*, ou 36,720,000 marks ou 45,000,000 fr., divisé en 90,000 actions de 20*l.*, 408 marks ou 500 fr. chacune. Il pourra être augmenté de moitié par l'Assemblée Générale." As stated above, the words "de moitié" are replaced by the words "jusqu'à concurrence de 135,000,000 fr."

The 90,000 shares, viz., nominal capital of 45,000,000 fr., as above mentioned, constitute the capital created in shares of first series, liable, as stated, to be increased by one half, namely, by 22,500,000 fr.

In 1893, on the occasion of the construction of the Eski-Chehir Konia line, of this sum of 22,500,000 fr., there was an issue of a nominal capital of 15,000,000 fr. (representing 30,000 shares) under the denomination of second series.

In 1903, at the time of the construction of the Bagdad line, the Anatolian Railway Company issued the remaining balance of the sum of 22,500,000 fr., (namely, 7,500,000 fr.) under the denomination of third series, in order (1) to participate in the Bagdad Concession by a purchase of shares in that Company; (2) to participate in the Haidar Pasha Port Company; and (3) to take a share in the Construction Company of the Bagdad Railway.

Thus the nominal capital of the Anatolian Railway Company, of which the original capital issued was by this time increased by half, was sub-divided as follows:—

	Nominal Capital.
	Fr.
90,000 shares of 500 fr., first series	45,000,000
30,000 shares of 500 fr., second series	15,000,000
15,000 shares of 500 fr., third series	7,500,000
Total	67,500,000

This nominal capital is again now doubled by the decision of the general meeting of the 28th June, 1907, as above stated. Only 60 per cent. of the original nominal capital was called up. It was deemed impossible to call up the remaining 40 per cent. of the nominal capital without depressing the value of the share, and the General Assembly of the 28th June, 1907, conferred on the Council of Administration all the necessary powers for the issue and sale of the new shares, or for a call on these new shares. On the 10th January, 1908, the Deutsche Bank took up the 135,000 shares to be newly created, namely, nominal capital, 67,500,000 fr.; the Deutsche Bank on that date made a first payment to the Anatolian Railway Company of 10 per cent. at par, plus interest at 5 per cent. calculated from the 31st December, 1907, to date of payment.

The Deutsche Bank engages itself to pay to the Anatolian Railway Company all profit or benefit which will be realized above 2½ per cent. on the nominal value of the shares until the 10th January, 1918, by the sale of the same shares. It agrees also to reserve for the shareholders of Series I, II, and III a preferential right in the eventual issue of the new shares.

Thus the Deutsche Bank provides to-day 10 per cent. of 67,500,000 fr., namely, 6,750,000 fr. with interest at 5 per cent. for ten days—

	Fr.
	6,750,000
Interest, ten days	9,247
	6,759,247

which will be utilized as an instalment for the irrigation works at Konia.

As I have before stated, the sum of 19,500,000 fr. will be required for the irrigation works, 2,272,720 fr. for the doubling of the line to Pendik (25 kilom.), and, say, 8,000,000 fr. for the eventual consolidation of the existing line for an express service; but the money will not be required at once. As the works proceed, the Deutsche Bank will put up more money. The total sum required will not, it is believed, exceed 20,772,720 fr. to be spent as above.

The shares will be non-transferable shares for the present, and will be distributed only among the Banks belonging to the Deutsche Bank Syndicate. Only when 50 per cent. (more than what is required for the present expenditure) of the nominal capital has to be called up will the shares be made transferable and put on the market.

The Deutsche Bank group will thus retain a preponderant part of the new share capital.

Before concluding this Memorandum, I wish to refer to the recent advance of £T. 240,000 made to the Government by the Anatolian Railway Company.

It is generally believed that the German Government has a promise from the Sultan that the Government's three-quarter share of the surplus of the ceded revenues belonging to the bondholders shall be reserved for the construction of the Bagdad Railway. The surplus last year was about £T. 500,000; this year it will be more, £T. 560,000 (Government's share, say, £T. 420,000, and after payment of fixed charges, leaving £T. 280,000 available).

In December 1906 Baron Marshall—the French Delegate at the Debt then supported the Germans—would not allow even £T. 50,000 of this surplus to be pledged as part of the guarantee for the annual payment by the Debt of £T. 250,000 for Macedonia in case the Government's three-quarter share in the product of the 3 per cent. did not suffice for the financial needs of the three vilayets, and in April last year (1907) when the Ottoman Bank advanced £T. 200,000 on the surplus of the ceded revenues the Germans did not fail to express their displeasure.

The Ottoman Bank, in order to bring pressure to bear on the Turkish Government in the hope that the Government will grant to M. Vitalis and the French group the Heraclea Coal Concession, declines to come to the assistance of the Government in its financial straits; the Germans again rush to the rescue, and the Anatolian Railway Company advances £T. 240,000 (£T. 200,000 surplus of the ceded revenues and £T. 40,000 on Agricultural Bank); it is said that the Germans endeavoured again to obtain a confirmation of the promise that these surpluses would be reserved for the Bagdad Railway and *en attendant* that they should only be pledged for temporary advances to the Deutsche Bank. In any case, they probably imposed some conditions which they will endeavour to enforce when the time comes.

	£T.
The surplus of the ceded revenues is pledged to the Ottoman Bank to the amount of	676,230
The Germans have now to receive	200,000
Total	876,230

Plus interest at 7 per cent.

This, in all probability, will not be paid off until 1911, but if any loan operation is undertaken by the Germans for the purpose of the construction of further sections of the Bagdad Railway secured on the Government's share in the surplus of the ceded revenues, these advances may be funded or incorporated in such new loan. The Germans have therefore been allowed by the bank to obtain for the first time a material lien on the surplus of the ceded revenues; they will never relinquish it. I question whether the bank has acted wisely.

I am told by the Director-General of the Ottoman Bank that the bank has as much as £. T. 2,000,000 to receive from various departments of the State. (M. Constans puts the figure at 50,000,000 fr.)

This may be so, but, to my knowledge, from the ceded revenues and "revenus divers" of the Debt Administration, the Ottoman Bank, apart from fixed assignments, has still to receive for various advances £T. 926,230 (£T. 676,230 advanced on the security of the surplus of the ceded revenues, and £T. 250,000 on the security of the surplus of the tithes collected by the Debt Administration, plus interest at 7 per cent.).

The Germans, to my knowledge, have to receive from the Government £T. 830,000, made up as follows:—

	£T.
Deutsche Bank secured on customs	330,000
Deutsche Orient Bank secured on the receipts of the military equipment chest, ...	300,000
Deutsche Bank (Anatolian Railway Company) secured on the surplus of the ceded revenues	200,000
£T. 40,000 on the Agricultural Bank	40,000
Total	870,000

Plus interest at 7 per cent.

The Ottoman Bank seems to be somewhat perturbed at seeing the Germans coming again to the assistance of the Government. M. Auboyneau, the Bank Director in Paris, has told me he hoped to reserve the surplus of the ceded revenues for a loan operation, which must come if the Ottoman Government continues its present financial policy, and the Germans have now obtained a lien on the surplus of the ceded revenues.

The Turkish Government is far from satisfied with the Ottoman Bank's policy of restricting their credit in order to obtain a Concession which they would rather not grant; at the same time, the Government are not displeased at seeing the German banks supplanting the Ottoman Bank. It is also evident that the Germans, by easing the strain, have rendered M. Constans' task of obtaining the Heraclea Coal Concession more difficult whilst strengthening their hold on the finances of the country, and especially on the surplus of the ceded revenues.

They have in the last few months shown that they intend to prosecute their policy of financing and developing the country with energy and persistence.

When their hold on the surplus revenues of the debt is assured, as it will be, the Germans may take a stronger line in the Debt Administration; and it is consoling at any rate to think that it is most improbable that they will tolerate any attempt of the Turkish Government to repudiate their engagements to the bondholders; on the contrary they will strive to extend the control of the Debt Administration. The French have the largest holding in the Turkish External Debt, but should the surplus of the ceded revenues pass into the hands of the Germans they will be equally or more interested in the efficient and untrammelled administration of the ceded revenues, and when a control of Turkish finances become inevitable there is little doubt but that Germany will play a leading rôle.

It is only fair to the Germans to add, in conclusion, that, whilst they are increasing their stake in the country and promoting their economic and financial interests, they are, as far as the Konia irrigation scheme at any rate is concerned, finding money for an enterprise which cannot fail to be of great benefit to the population and agricultural interests of the country, and which, if successfully executed, will lead to a large increase in the revenues of the district, thus to a certain extent alleviating the financial straits of the Government.

I am reliably informed that owing to the imperative demands for baksheesh which have to be conceded, the profit on the construction of the irrigation works will be very small if any at all. The profit to the Germans will be in the increase to the railway receipts; this will also alleviate the burden of the kilometric guarantees, and to that extent will benefit the Ottoman Treasury. The increased receipts are estimated to reach £T. 60,000 per annum.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

January 21, 1908.

Inclosure 2 in No. 45.

Convention.

ENTRE son Excellence Méhémed Zia Pacha, Ministre des Finances, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, d'une part, et M. Édouard Huguenin, Directeur-Général de la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, agissant au nom et pour compte de la dite Société, d'autre part, il a été arrêté ce qui suit:—

ARTICLE 1er.

Le Gouvernement Impérial charge la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie d'exécuter, pour compte du Trésor, les travaux nécessaires pour irriguer la Plaine de Konia, au moyen des eaux du Lac de Bey-Chéhir et des Rivières du Bey-Chéhir et du Tcharchamba Tchai, et en outre pour dessécher le Lac de Karaviran et irriguer au moyen des eaux ci-dessus 80,000 donnums de terrains qui seront réalisés du chef de ce dessèchement, le tout suivant les indications du Cahier des Charges et du plan général annexés à la présente Convention, et la dite Société s'engage à exécuter les travaux en question.

ARTICLE 2.

La Société ayant lors de la discussion de cette affaire avec le Ministère de la Liste Civile déjà procédé aux études nécessaires, devra, dans un délai maximum d'un mois, compté à partir de la date de l'échange de la présente, soumettre à l'approbation du Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, en double expédition, les cartes, les projets, ainsi que les détails, plans, et profils de tous les travaux à exécuter.

Ces plans, projets, &c., devront être examinés par le dit Ministère et approuvés tels quels, ou modifiés s'il y a lieu, dans le délai de trois mois à partir de la date de leur présentation.

Passé ce délai, si le Gouvernement n'a pas notifié sa décision à la Société, celle-ci pourra considérer les plans et projets susénoncés comme approuvés, et procéder à l'exécution des travaux.

Si le Ministère apporte aux plans et projets des modifications, et que l'exécution de ces modifications nécessite plus d'un mois, le délai fixé pour la construction sera prolongé d'une période égale à celle du retard causé par l'examen de ces modifications et l'approbation des plans.

ARTICLE 3.

La Société s'engage à commencer les travaux dans un délai de quatre mois à partir de l'approbation des plans et projets, et à les terminer dans un délai de six ans, étant entendu que la campagne de belle saison de la première année sera consacrée à l'installation des chantiers.

Toutefois, si les gouffres de Karaviran ont une capacité suffisante pour absorber le trop-plein des eaux du Lac de Bey-Chéhir, l'achèvement des travaux de dessèchement du Lac de Karaviran et l'irrigation des 80,000 deunums des terrains devront être exécutés dans un délai de trois ans, à partir de l'installation des chantiers, et ces terrains seront mis en état arable.

Néanmoins, en cas de force majeure les délais d'exécution seront prolongés d'une durée égale à celle de l'interruption des travaux, à la condition que la Société avise immédiatement et par écrit le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics.

ARTICLE 4.

Le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics contrôlera les travaux par l'intermédiaire d'un ou de plusieurs Commissaires, durant leur exécution, à l'achèvement des travaux et jusqu'à la réception. La Société déposera chaque année, à l'ordre du Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, et à titre de frais de contrôle, une somme de £ T. 250, payable mensuellement et par douzièmes, et ce, à partir de la date fixée pour le commencement des travaux jusqu'à leur réception définitive.

ARTICLE 5.

Si les terrains nécessaires aux travaux de terrassement et aux ouvrages d'art, ainsi qu'à l'ouverture de routes, à la construction des bâtiments nécessaires, et à l'extraction de pierres et de sable, font partie des terrains dits "Arazîi-Haliéi-Emirié," ils seront livrés gratuitement à la Société.

Le Ministère des Finances mettra également à titre gratuit, à la disposition de la Société, ceux des terrains qui feraient partie du domaine privé, après les avoir expropriés en conformité des Règlements et des usages en vigueur.

Seront de même livrés gratuitement et temporairement à la Société les terrains à utiliser d'une manière provisoire pendant la durée des travaux.

A cet effet, la Société fournira au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics au fur et à mesure de l'avancement des travaux, les plans des terrains qui seront occupés comme il vient d'être dit, soit définitivement, soit temporairement.

Ces plans seront examinés par le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics dans le délai d'un mois à partir de leur présentation, et ils seront expédiés par le dit Département au Ministère des Finances après avoir été approuvés tels quels ou modifiés.

Deux mois après la fourniture de ces plans par la Société, le Ministère des Finances mettra les terrains indiqués ci-dessus à la disposition de la Société.

Il est entendu, que si par suite de cas de force majeure les dits terrains n'étaient pas mis à la disposition de la Société dans le délai de trois mois, les délais d'exécution seront majorés d'une durée égale au retard qui serait survenu.

A l'achèvement des travaux, tous les terrains remis à la Société seront restitués par celle-ci au Gouvernement Impérial.

ARTICLE 6.

Tous les matériaux et machines généralement quelconques, et approvisionnements nécessaires pour l'exécution des travaux, qu'ils soient achetés dans l'Empire ou qu'ils proviennent de l'étranger, seront exempts de tous impôts intérieurs et de tous droits de douane, d'entrée et de sortie.

La Société sera, en ce qui concerne les travaux faisant l'objet de la présente Convention, soumise aux droits sur le timbre.

ARTICLE 7.

Les bois et charpentes nécessaires à l'exécution des travaux pourront être coupés dans les forêts appartenant à l'État, moyennant le paiement par la Société, des droits réglementaires, et ce, à la suite des communications qui seront faites par la Société au Ministère des Finances et par celui-ci au Département des Mines et Forêts, sur base de listes indiquant la nature et la quantité des bois et charpentes nécessaires, ainsi que la désignation des forêts d'où ces bois seront coupés.

L'autorisation y relative devra parvenir à la Société dans le délai d'un mois à partir de la date de la remise de ces listes au Ministère des Finances.

ARTICLE 8.

Aussitôt que la Société notifiera au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics l'achèvement d'une section exploitable de travaux, le Ministère fera inspecter les Travaux par une Commission Technique nommée à cet effet et procédera s'il y a lieu à la réception provisoire de la dite section; un an après la réception provisoire une seconde inspection des travaux sera faite par une Commission Technique; et dans le cas où il serait constaté que les travaux ont été exécutés conformément aux règles de l'art et aux prescriptions du Cahier des Charges, le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics prononcera la réception définitive de la section.

A la réception définitive d'une section, le Gouvernement Impérial procédera à l'exploitation de cette section aussitôt qu'il le voudra.

L'entretien de la section dont on aura procédé à la mise en exploitation, dans les conditions prévues ci-haut, aura lieu, avec l'aide de la Société et aux frais du Gouvernement Impérial jusqu'à la réception définitive de tous les travaux.

De même l'entretien de l'ensemble des travaux aura lieu, avec l'aide de la Société et aux frais du Gouvernement Impérial, pendant un délai de cinq années, compté à partir de leur réception définitive. Au besoin, le Gouvernement Impérial aura également le droit de mettre en exploitation telle partie des travaux dont la réception provisoire aura été prononcée, mais dans ce cas la mise en exploitation constituera réception définitive de cette partie des travaux.

Dès que le Lac de Karaviran sera desséché et que les terrains gagnés seront irrigables dans le délai stipulé par la présente Convention, le Gouvernement Impérial pourra immédiatement prendre possession des terrains.

ARTICLE 9.

La Société construira gratuitement les baraques destinées au logement des agents de la force publique, tels que gendarmes et agents de police.

ARTICLE 10.

La Société installera, sur tout le parcours des travaux, une ligne télégraphique à utiliser exclusivement pour la bonne exécution et l'entretien des ouvrages.

Il est formellement interdit à la Société de transmettre par cette ligne des correspondances privées.

A l'achèvement des travaux, la Société abandonnera gratuitement et en bon état au Gouvernement Impérial, à l'instar des autres travaux, cette ligne avec tous ses accessoires.

ARTICLE 11.

La Société a le droit de transporter gratuitement par les trains du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie et du Chemin de Fer Impérial de Bagdad ses agents et ouvriers ainsi que tous les objets nécessaires pour l'exécution des travaux.

Elle est également autorisée à transporter par ses propres moyens, sans payer aucune taxe postale, les lettres et valises concernant exclusivement l'exécution des travaux, mais à la condition de les soumettre suivant la règle au contrôle des agents de l'Administration des Postes. Les lettres privées du personnel seront soumises aux taxes postales. La Société ne pourra effectuer le transport de lettres de cette nature qu'en se soumettant aux prescriptions du Règlement Intérieur des Postes en vigueur dans l'Empire.

Si le Gouvernement Impérial décide de créer dans la zone des terrains à irriguer des villages pour y installer des Mouhadjirs Musulmans, la Société s'engage à transporter à moitié taxe de concession les matériaux, agents, et ouvriers nécessaires à la construction des bâtisses.

ARTICLE 12.

Le coût des travaux faisant l'objet de la présente Convention sera calculé de la manière suivante :—

Tous les six mois, à partir de la date du commencement des travaux, la Société dressera une situation provisoire sur la base de la Série des Prix ci-après et comportant les travaux achevés et ceux en cours d'exécution. Ces derniers seront calculés en fractions du prix d'unité équivalentes à l'avancement du travail par rapport au total de l'unité.

Cette situation provisoire après avoir été examinée par le Commissaire Impérial et approuvée telle quelle ou modifiée s'il y a lieu, sera remise par la Société au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics.

Le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics fera parvenir à la Société son acceptation ou ses observations, dans un délai maximum d'un mois à partir de la date de la présentation des situations. Dans le cas contraire, celles-ci seront considérées comme approuvées par le Gouvernement Impérial.

Le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics remettra, au Ministère des Finances, accompagnées d'un tezkéré, les situations que la Section Technique aura examinées et approuvées. Ce dernier Ministère fera courir pour les sommes indiquées dans ces situations, un intérêt simple au taux de 5 pour cent par an à partir d'une date de trois mois antérieure à leur présentation au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics.

Désignation et Prix des Travaux à exécuter pour l'Irrigation de la Plaine de Konia et pour le Dessèchement et l'Irrigation du Bassin de Karaviran.

Chapitre.	Description des Travaux.	Prix.	Total.
		Fr.	Fr.
1	Travaux au Lac de Bey-Chéhir—		
(*a.*)	Grandes digues pour la retenue du lac, raccordées aux routes et un barrage à vannes de Bey-Chéhir, sur une longueur de 1,000 m. l.	50	50,000
(*b.*)	Dragage d'un canal d'accès dans le lac, sur une longueur de 1,000 m. l.	200	200,000
(*c.*)	Barrage à vannes de Bey-Chéhir, ainsi— Fr.		
	Déviation de la rivière, batardeau double pour retenue du lac, déblai, et épuisement par des pompes centrifuges 190,000		
	Fondation, glacis, parafouille 150,000		
	Maçonnerie en élévation avec arcades 185,000		
	Partie mécanique 60,000		
	Magasin 15,000		
	(Une pièce).	600,000	600,000

Chapitre.	Description des Travaux.	Prix.	Total.
		Fr.	Fr.
2	Correction des rivières de Bey-Chéhir et de Tcharchamba avec le raccordement des embouchures de leurs affluents ; l'élévation de digues, les canaux d'écoulement et tous les ouvrages d'art de cette partie, à l'exception des prises d'eau—		
(*a.*)	Bey-Chéhir Tchai, et Tcharchamba Tchai, en trois sections, avec la réparation de dix ponts, sur une longueur de 60 kilom.	21,000	1,260,000
(*b.*)	1. Un pont à réparer et trois ponts neufs, correction du Tcharchamba Tchai sur une longueur de 37 kilom., construction de deux chutes artificielles, la défense de quatorze torrents	28,725	1,062,825
	2. Du pont d'Appa jusqu'au chemin de fer, avec trois ponts à réparer, un pont neuf, et un passerelle à Yaila, sur une longueur de 53 kilom.	16,075	851,975
	3. Au nord-est du chemin de fer, sans ouvrages d'art, sur une longueur de 25 kilom.	9,600	240,000
3	La réunion des rivières par les canaux entièrement neufs contournant le bassin de Karaviran et passant par la vallée de Balikova, avec l'élévation de digues, les canaux d'écoulement et les ouvrages d'art de cette partie, à l'exception des prises d'eau—		
(*a.*)	Canal contournant le bassin de Karaviran, avec trois ponts à réparer et trois barrages de défense dans les torrents, sur une longueur de 30 kilom.	87,000	2,610,000
(*b.*)	Canal dans la vallée de Balikova, avec quatre ponts neufs, dix défenses de torrents, et quatre chutes artificielles, sur une longueur de 20 kilom.	66,260	1,325,200
4	Travaux dans la plaine de Konia, avec les canaux principaux, secondaires et tertiaires, les canaux de décharge principaux et secondaires, et leurs digues, les routes et les ponts de communication, deux grandes prises d'eau à Yaila et dans la plaine même avec leurs barrages et écluses de chasse et toutes les prises d'eau pour les canaux secondaires et les écluses dans les canaux principaux—		
(*a.*)	Section 1, au nord-ouest—		
	1. Canalisation, sur 250,000 deunums	14·75	3,687,500
	2. Ouvrages d'art, sur 250,000 deunums	7·25	1,812,500
(*b.*)	Section 2, au sud-est—		
	1. Canalisation, sur 250,000 deunums	10·25	2,562,500
	2. Ouvrages d'art, sur 250,000 deunums	6·75	1,687,500
5	Travaux dans le bassin de Karaviran, avec le canal principal et les canaux secondaires, les canaux de décharge y correspondant et un grand canal de décharge conduisant aux gouffres, leurs digues et les routes et les ponts de communication, une prise d'eau au canal de réunion et les prises d'eau des canaux secondaires—		
	1. Canalisation, sur 80,000 deunums	12·25	980,000
	Ouvrages d'art, sur 80,000 deunums	6·50	520,000
6	Divers—		
(*a.*)	Bâtiments pour ingénieurs et surveillants et petits magasins ..	A forfait ..	150,000
(*b.*)	Installation télégraphique complète	" ..	100,000
	Total général	..	19,500,000

Les unités de prix établies par deunum dans la Série ci-dessus ont été calculées par rapport à la superficie en deunums des frais de fouilles et de travaux à effectuer en vue du dessèchement et de l'irrigation du Lac de Karaviran et de la Plaine de Konia.

On diminuera de 4 pour cent les deunums qui seront constatés lors du mesurage, et on en portera les 96 pour cent dans les situations qui seront remises au fur et à mesure de l'avancement des travaux dans ces régions.

A l'achèvement de l'ensemble des travaux et à la réception provisoire qui en sera faite, on procédera au mesurage des quantités conjointement avec les fonctionnaires désignés par le Gouvernement Impérial et la Société, et on établira le montant réel des travaux suivant les unités de prix indiquées dans la Série, à la condition d'opérer, comme il a été dit plus haut, une réduction de 4 pour cent sur les surfaces établies par deunums.

Il est toutefois entendu que comme le Gouvernement Impérial a accepté comme montant réel des frais la somme maxima de 19,500,000 fr., si ces frais sont supérieurs à 19,500,000 fr., le surplus au delà de 19,500,000 fr. ne sera pas à la charge du Gouvernement Impérial.

Si le calcul donne pour le montant réel des frais un chiffre inférieur à 19,500,000 fr., c'est sur la base de ce chiffre inférieur que les frais seront réglés.

Le montant réel des frais des travaux établi dans ces conditions, majoré des intérêts simples au taux de 5 pour cent afférent aux sommes indiquées dans les situations remises antérieurement, constituera la Dette du Gouvernement Impérial envers la Société du chef des frais des travaux.

ARTICLE 13.

Les sommes dont le montant aura été constaté d'après les stipulations de l'Article précédent, seront remboursées et amorties en trente-cinq ans, à compter de la date de l'achèvement de tous les travaux et de leur réception provisoire, à raison de 5 pour cent d'intérêt et de 1·1072 pour cent d'amortissement par an, et au moyen des ressources énumérées ci-bas, que le Gouvernement Impérial affecte à cet objet, savoir :—

1. Une somme fixe annuelle de £ T. 25,000 payable par l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane sur les excédents des dîmes affectées aux garanties kilométriques et au service des annuités de divers emprunts.

Ces £ T. 25,000 ne seront versées par la Dette qu'après prélèvement préalable, sur le montant de ces excédents, des sommes annuelles suivantes :—

£ T. 108,000 destinées au service du Compte-Courant Statutaire de la Banque Impériale Ottomane, de l'allocation de ses succursales, &c. ;

£ T. 250,000 nécessaires pour couvrir le déficit budgétaire des trois vilayets de Roumélie ;

La somme affectée annuellement aux frais des transports effectués par les Chemins de Fer Orientaux ;

La part revenant au Ministère des Equipements Militaires (Tedjhizat-Azkérié) dans les dits excédents ;

Les sommes assignées au remboursement de certaines avances et autres opérations de Trésorerie jusqu'à la date de la signature du présent contrat.

2. Le surplus obtenu dans le rendement des dîmes des terres soumises à l'irrigation, par rapport aux recettes moyennes de ces mêmes dîmes pendant les cinq dernières années.

Ces dîmes seront mises en adjudication selon l'usage en vigueur et leur produit devra être versé à l'Agence de la Banque Impériale Ottomane à Konia. Celle-ci remettra à la Société le montant du susdit produit, en sus des £ T. 25,000 précitées, afin de parfaire le chiffre des annuités.

3. Le produit net des recettes qui seront encaissées en suite des travaux d'irrigation à effectuer, d'une manière opportune, par le Gouvernement Impérial, déduction faite des frais de réparations permanentes et d'exploitation.

4. Le produit des terrains desséchés et irrigués, qui seront mis en vente pour y établir des villages Musulmans, et ce, indépendamment des terrains de même nature réservés à l'installation des émigrés Musulmans.

Les ressources énumérées ci-dessus seront affectées, comme il vient d'être dit, aux annuités payables par le Gouvernement Impérial, pour l'intérêt et l'amortissement des frais constatés.

ARTICLE 14.

Au cas où les affectations énoncées à l'Article précédent ne suffiraient pas au paiement des annuités, le Gouvernement Impérial s'engage à parfaire le déficit au moyen de ses autres revenus.

ARTICLE 15.

Conformément à l'Article 13, les annuités seront exigibles à partir de la date de la réception provisoire ; mais le Gouvernement Impérial aura à payer également, pendant les années antérieures à la réception provisoire, la somme fixe annuelle de £ T. 25,000 à prélever sur les excédents des dîmes, d'après la teneur du dit Article 13.

Toutefois, le montant total des versements effectués jusqu'à la date de la réception provisoire et des intérêts courus, au taux de 5 pour cent l'an, à partir des dates de ces versements jusqu'au jour de la réception provisoire, devra être déduit du

montant des frais constatés, à déterminer selon les dispositions de l'Article 12, et le solde restant des dits frais sera remboursé par annuités de 5 pour cent d'intérêt et de 1·1072 d'amortissement, ainsi qu'il est stipulé plus haut.

ARTICLE 16.

Dans le cas où le produit total des affectations spécifiées à l'Article 13 s'élèverait à une somme supérieure au chiffre des annuités, le surplus devra être imputé sur l'amortissement, et le Gouvernement Impérial aura le droit de rembourser, à tout moment, en totalité ou en partie, au moyen d'autres ressources, le capital des frais constatés et d'en régler définitivement les comptes, avant l'expiration du terme cinq années.

ARTICLE 17.

La Société prendra toutes les mesures voulues pour ne pas interrompre la circulation pendant l'exécution des travaux.

Les travaux devront être exécutés de façon à ne provoquer aucune inondation. Il est clair cependant que les eaux de décharge et celles en surplus, non utilisées pour irriguer, devront être déversées dans la Plaine de Konia, dans les parties plus basses que les terrains irrigués.

ARTICLE 18.

Toutes contestations et différends qui surviendraient, soit entre le Gouvernement Impérial et la Société, soit entre celle-ci et les particuliers, par suite de l'exécution ou de l'interprétation de la présente Convention et du Cahier des Charges, seront déférés aux Tribunaux compétents Ottomans.

ARTICLE 19.

La Société ne peut transférer à un autre les engagements qu'elle assume par la présente Convention.

ARTICLE 20.

La Société devra correspondre en langue Turque avec les différents Départements de l'État.

La présente Convention a été, conformément au Firman promulgué par Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan en date du 14 Cheval, 1325 (7 Novembre, 1323), faite en double et signée et échangée à Constantinople, le 17 Cheval, 1325 (10 (23) Novembre, 1323 (1907)).

(Signé) ZIA.
ED. HUGUÉNIN.

Inclosure 3 in No. 45.

Convention Additionnelle à la Convention du 22 Septembre, 1304, *relative à la Concession du Chemin de Fer d'Angora.*

LE transport des voyageurs augmentant de jour en jour entre Haïdar-Pacha et Pendik, il a été reconnu nécessaire, pour faciliter et accélérer ces transports et pour faire disparaître les inconvénients (de l'état actuel) de procéder à l'exécution de la seconde voie ainsi que de certains travaux d'agrandissement, et bien que la Société soit, en vertu des prescriptions de l'Article VII de la Convention du 22 Septembre, 1304, obligés de construire la seconde voie, comme cette obligation ne devient exécutoire que lorsque les recettes brutes atteindront 30,000 fr. par kilom., il a été arrêté entre son Excellence Zihni Pacha, Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial et M. Édouard Huguénin, Directeur-Général de la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, agissant au nom de cette Société, que sans attendre jusqu'à ce moment-là, la dite Société exécutera dès à présent aux clauses ci-après la seconde voie de la section comprise entre Haïdar-Pacha et Pendik (cette dernière station comprise).

ARTICLE Ier.

La Société établira, sur la section susmentionnée, dans des conditions dignes de la capitale de l'Empire Ottoman, de façon à suffire aux besoins du public, la seconde voie ainsi que les agrandissements et installations en conséquence.

Elle transformera en passages supérieurs ou passages inférieurs les passages à niveau existant actuellement sur la dite section; et elle exécutera, de mêmes en passages supérieurs ou en passages inférieurs les passages qui seront désignés lors de la présentation et de l'examen des projets.

ARTICLE 2.

La Société devra, dans un délai maximum de six mois compté à partir de la date de l'échange de la présente Convention Additionnelle, soumettre à l'approbation du Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, en triple expédition, les plans et projets complets ainsi que le détail estimatif de tous les travaux à exécuter entre Haïdar-Pacha et Pendik (inclusivement), ces travaux devant naturellement être conçus de manière à satisfaire aux règles de l'art, ainsi qu'aux prescriptions du Cahier des Charges de la ligne d'Angora.

Il est toutefois entendu que:

1. Les rails, traverses, &c., de la seconde voie seront conformes aux types approuvés par le Ministère pour le Chemin de Fer de Bagdad.

2. L'épaisseur du ballast sera portée à 10 centimètres.

3. Les ponts métalliques seront calculés conformément aux stipulations contenues dans la dernière Circulaire du Ministère des Travaux Publics du Gouvernement Royal Prussien.

Les plans et projets dont il vient d'être parlé seront examinés par le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics et approuvés tels quels ou modifiés, s'il y a lieu, dans un délai maximum de trois mois. Et c'est dans ce même délai que le Gouvernement Impérial arrêtera, après examen de la part du service technique du Ministère et d'accord avec la Société, la somme forfaitaire nécessaire pour l'exécution des travaux et l'acquisition des terrains, étant entendu que cette somme forfaitaire ne devra pas dépasser £ T. 100,000.

ARTICLE 3.

La Société exécutera les dits travaux dans un délai maximum de dix-huit mois, comptés à partir de l'approbation des projets.

ARTICLE 4.

Les travaux faisant l'objet de la présente Convention Additionnelle étant d'utilité publique, les prescriptions de l'Article VI de la Convention du 22 Septembre, 1304, seront applicables aux terrains à exproprier nécessaires à l'établissement des dits travaux.

ARTICLE 5.

Les stipulations contenues à l'Article VIII de la Convention du 22 Septembre, 1304, et relatives à la franchise, sont applicables aux matériaux et objets nécessaires au premier établissement des travaux faisant l'objet de la présente Convention Additionnelle.

ARTICLE 6.

Aussitôt que la Société notifiera l'achèvement de l'ensemble des travaux au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, ce dernier fera examiner les dits travaux par une Commission Technique nommée à cet effet, et procédera à leur réception provisoire s'il y a lieu. Un an après la réception provisoire une seconde inspection des travaux sera faite par une Commission Technique; et dans le cas où il

sera constaté que les travaux ont été exécutés conformément aux règles de l'art et aux projets approuvés, le Ministère, sur le rapport de la Commission, prononcera la réception définitive.

ARTICLE 7.

A partir de la réception provisoire des travaux, la somme forfaitaire ne devant pas dépasser £ T. 100,000, à laquelle auront été évalués ces travaux et les expropriations des terrains, suivant les prescriptions de l'Article 2, portera intérêts simples de 5 pour cent par an.

L'amortissement et les intérêts des dépenses forfaitaires dont il vient d'être parlé, seront réglés de la manière suivante, à savoir:

On déterminera la moyenne annuelle des recettes brutes de la section entre Haïdar-Pacha et Pendik depuis le 1er Janvier, 1897, jusqu'au 31 Décembre, 1906; l'excédent des recettes brutes de la dite section, au delà du chiffre ainsi déterminé, ne sera pas porté au compte des recettes générales de la ligne Haïdar-Pacha–Ismidt, et sera affecté au paiement des intérêts et de l'amortissement des dépenses forfaitaires susmentionnées.

Si l'excédent des recettes ci-dessus mentionnées ne suffisait pas à payer les intérêts des dépenses de construction, le déficit sera prélevé sur les excédents des recettes des années suivantes.

Le Gouvernement Impérial aura d'ailleurs, à tout moment, le droit de rembourser le montant non encore amorti.

Il est bien entendu que dès que les dépenses forfaitaires de construction auront été entièrement remboursées, les excédents dont il vient d'être parlé seront naturellement portés dans le compte général des recettes du chemin de fer.

Lorsque les recettes totales de la ligne de Haïdar-Pacha–Angora, y compris les recettes totales de la section Haïdar-Pacha–Pendik, dépasseront le montant total des recettes brutes garanties par le Gouvernement Impérial en vertu de la Convention du 22 Septembre, 1304, on ne portera plus, comme cela avait été stipulé plus haut, à un compte spécial les excédents de la section Haïdar-Pacha–Pendik, et les intérêts et l'amortissement des dépenses de construction seront réglés sur la part de recette revenant au Gouvernement Impérial en vertu de la Convention du 22 Septembre, 1304, précitée.

Il est d'ailleurs entendu que, si la part du Gouvernement Impérial ne suffisait pas à payer les intérêts et amortissement en question, l'insuffisance sera prélevée sur les excédents revenant au Gouvernement Impérial du chef des années suivantes.

ARTICLE 8.

A partir du moment où les recettes brutes atteindront le chiffre de 30,000 fr. par kilomètre, prévu à l'Article VII de la Convention du 22 Septembre, 1304, la Société exécutera, en conformité de l'Article 7, à ses frais, la double voie au delà de Pendik, et remboursera au Gouvernement Impérial les amortissements que celui-ci aura déjà effectués conformément à la présente Convention.

ARTICLE 9.

La seconde voie ne bénéficiera naturellement d'aucune garantie kilométrique, et les frais d'exploitation et d'entretien en seront à la charge de la Société.

La présente Convention Additionnelle a été, conformément à l'Iradé promulgué par Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, faite en double et signée et échangée à Constantinople le 19 Ramazan, 1325 (13 (26) Octobre, 1323 (1907)).

(Signé) ZIHNI.
ED. HUGUÉNIN.

[2218] No. 46.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Foreign Office, February 4, 1908.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, inclosing copy of a Secret letter from the Government of India, as to the judicial powers of the Political Agent in Bahrein.

With regard to the question of the Agent's jurisdiction over British subjects, Sir E. Grey concurs in the recommendations of the Government of India, as set forth in the second paragraph of your letter under reply.

Concerning the question of the Political Agent's jurisdiction over foreigners and the regularization of the British protectorate over Bahrein, Sir E. Grey is disposed to take any well-considered steps with regard to the consolidation of our protectorate. He would suggest, however, for Mr. Morley's consideration, that it might be advisable to take no action in the matter until the recommendations of the proposed Inter-departmental Committee on the policy of His Majesty's Government in the Persian Gulf shall have been formulated.

I am to inquire also whether Mr. Morley would prefer that action on the first point dealt with in this letter should be deferred for the moment so that the whole question might be dealt with at the same time.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[4065] No. 47.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received February 5.)

Board of Trade, London, February 5, 1908.

Sir,

WITH reference to your letter of the 23rd ultimo, respecting the Suklawiya Canal between the Tigris and Euphrates, I am directed by the Board of Trade to say that they have seen Mr. Hyde, M.P., of Messrs. S. Pearson and Son, Limited, on several occasions recently with regard to their intention to send an engineer to the East. Mr. Hyde has informed them that they definitely propose to send a competent engineer to Constantinople in connection with the Hindie Barrage, and also to Bagdad in connection with the Suklawiya Canal. The Board were also informed by Mr. Hyde that, if the plans of the canal were available in London before the engineer started for the East, Messrs. Pearson and Son would be in a better position, with the help of their skilled staff, to ascertain the probable cost of the work involved.

In these circumstances I am to suggest, should Sir E. Grey have no objection, that Mr. Ramsay at Bagdad should be informed by telegraph that Messrs. S. Pearson and Son, Limited, the well-known contractors, propose to make an investigation of the Sukhawiya Canal scheme on the spot, and that they would be glad to know whether M. Cugnin has any objection to the firm seeing the plans which were forwarded in Mr. Ramsay's despatch to the Foreign Office confidentially.

Mr. Hyde has informed this Department that he would be quite willing, in the circumstances, to guarantee that they would make no use of the plans to the disadvantage of M. Cugnin.

I am further to add that the Board have mentioned the matter of the construction of the proposed iron bridge across the Tigris at Bagdad to Mr. Hyde, which is referred to in Sir N. O'Conor's despatch to Foreign Office of the 14th ultimo, and that Mr. Hyde informed them that his engineer will look into this matter when at Bagdad, with a view to undertaking the construction of the bridge.

Mr. Hyde further stated that his engineer would be glad to consult Mr. Ramsay with regard to any other works which are suggested in the neighbourhood of Bagdad.

I am, &c.
(Signed) ARTHUR WILSON FOX.

[4065] No. 48.

Sir Edward Grey to Major Ramsay.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 5, 1908.*

PLEASE refer to your despatch No. 133 of the 3rd December, 1907, respecting Sukhawiya Canal.

The well-known contractors, Messrs. Pearson, of Victoria Street, intend to send out to Bagdad an engineer to examine the scheme on the spot.

Please report whether there would be any objection on part of M. Cugnin to the plans (inclosed in your above-mentioned despatch), being shown to Messrs. Pearson before the departure of their representative to Bagdad. They would undertake that plans should not be used to M. Cugnin's detriment.

[2889] No. 49.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 46.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 5, 1908.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 25 of the 17th ultimo, reporting the continuous efforts made by you to induce the Ottoman Government to adopt remedial measures for improving the miserable condition of the Armenians in the Bitlis Vilayet.

Your Excellency's action in watching the situation, and doing what has been possible to ameliorate the condition of the country, is entirely approved by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[2894] No. 50.

*Foreign Office to India Office.**

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 5, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 14th December, 1907, respecting the discourtesy shown to the officers of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" by the Turkish authorities at El Katif in June 1907, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to inclose herein, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on the subject.†

It will be seen that the present Kaimakam of El Katif has received written instructions to tender a formal apology to the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" on his next visit for the discourtesy shown by the previous Acting Kaimakam, but Sir N. O'Conor understands that, should His Majesty's Government so desire, the apology will be made to the Commander of the first British war-ship which may call there.

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that, if no apology is tendered until the return of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" herself, the incident may by that time be so remote that the apology will not have due effect locally. He would therefore propose, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Morley, to instruct Sir N. O'Conor to request that the apology shall be made to the Commander of the first British war-ship which may touch at El Katif.

A similar letter has been addressed to the Admiralty.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

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* Also to Admiralty, *mutatis mutandis*.

† No. 41.

[4198] No. 51.

Mr. Cumberbatch to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 6.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Beyrout, February 6, 1908.*

ON 23rd December I telegraphed to Sir N. O'Conor that the transport mentioned in your telegram of 5th February had arrived here on 21st December. She landed a General and forty officers in charge of six batteries of artillery, and a chest of Mauser rifles. They set out from here to go *vid* Aleppo to Bagdad.

[4236] No. 52.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 7.)

Sir, *India Office, February 6, 1908.*

I AM directed to inclose, to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 4th instant, reporting the conditions on which the Resident in the Gulf has given a guarantee to the German Consul that the labourers to be employed by Messrs. Wönckhaus in removing their red oxide from Abu Musa Island will not be hindered.

Mr. Secretary Morley, subject to Sir E. Grey's concurrence, proposes to inform the Government of India that the action of the Resident is approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 52.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, February 4, 1908.*

ABU MUSA. Your telegram of the 20th ultimo.

Major Cox telegraphed 29th ultimo as follows:-

"My telegram of the 10th instant. Official communication stating that Wönckhaus desired to remove oxide, and asking if I could guarantee that his labourers would not be hindered, was addressed to me on the 23rd instant by German Consul. In reply, I said I would give guarantee on following conditions: (1) Ten days' notice to be given me; (2) Wönckhaus' labourers to be removed on departure of ship; (3) oxide to be weighed in presence of his and my representatives. I am posting copies."

[4328] No. 53.

Mr. J. Mackay to Foreign Office.—(Received February 7.)

Sir, 9, *Throgmorton Avenue, London, February 6, 1908.*

WITH reference to your letter of the 22nd October, 1907, and its inclosure, I sent an extract of the inclosure confidentially to our agents in India, and have the pleasure to send you herewith copy of a letter from Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie, and Co., Calcutta, dated the 9th ultimo, giving extract of a letter from my partner, Mr. Carmichael, of Bombay, who recently visited the Persian Gulf, on the subject of freight on pearls from Bahrein to Hamburg. Mr. Carmichael's remarks on Wönckhaus may be of interest to you.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) JAS. R. MACKAY.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie, and Co. to Mr. P. Armour.

(Private and Confidential.)

Dear Sir, *Calcutta, January 9, 1908.*

WITH reference to your private letter of the 15th November, 1907, marked Confidential, we have privately been in communication with Bombay agents in regard to freight on shells from the Persian Gulf to Hamburg, and the following is an extract of a letter which will indicate to you as to the position of affairs and what is being done:—

"When in the Persian Gulf eighteen months ago I was much struck with the energy displayed by a German firm called R. Wönckhaus and Co. I travelled on more than one occasion with assistants of the firm, and at Bushire met Mr. Wönckhaus himself several times.

"Wönckhaus came to Bahrein from Zanzibar about fifteen years ago. He did a very small business at first—in fact, Europeans in the Gulf were unable to understand how he managed at all; certainly for several years it was said he could not have made as much as covered his expenses. He was supported by a Hamburg firm called Truan, Strucken, and Co., and it is believed that behind Truan, Strucken, and Co. was the German Government, so that one is not far wrong in assuming that indirectly Wönckhaus was supported by the German Government. Later on, Wönckhaus opened at Linga, and quite recently he blossomed out in a large way at Bushire and Bussorah, and his firm became the agents of the Hamburg-American Line at Bushire and Bussorah, so that in about fifteen years R. Wönckhaus and Co., of Bahrein or Linga, has become one of the largest firms, if not the largest firm, in the Gulf. They have houses at Bunder Abbas, Linga, Bahrein, Bushire, and Bussorah, and seem quite willing to open wherever they think they can get a footing. Recently they leased the Island of Abu Musa from the Sheikh of Sharga or from an Arab tenant of the Sheikh. Messrs. Wönckhaus, I believe, made a contract to take all the red ochre the Arab could supply, but a month ago they made another arrangement with the Arab under which they (Wönckhaus) took over from the Arab the latter's arrangement with the Sheikh, with the object of practically working the island themselves, and no doubt making it, in course of time, a coaling station in the Gulf for the Hamburg-American steamers. The Consul at Bushire, it is believed, got a hint of the arrangement, and the Sheikh of Sharga subsequently sent a number of followers in boats and forcibly took possession of the island.

"Mr. Brown, the representative of Wönckhaus at Linga, came across in a boat flying the German flag, and whether it is correct or no, Captain Morrison, of the 'Goalpara,' who arrived a week ago, reports that the flag was riddled by the Sheikh of Sharga's followers, and was now being sent to Berlin.

"The Germans have been trying to obtain a coaling station in the Gulf for some time, and about May last year Mr. Alfred Truan, of Messrs. Truan, Strucken, and Co., was out. It was said that his object in going to Tehran was to endeavour to obtain a coaling station.

"About four years ago one of Messrs. Wönckhaus' assistants was assaulted by the Sheikh of Bahrein or his people, and the German Government then threatened to send their own gun-boats if the British Government could not guarantee to protect German subjects. The Sheikh or the British Government paid an indemnity to Messrs. Wönckhaus' assistant, but from the account I heard the assistant give of the incident, I had a feeling that the thrashing he got was well deserved.

"When at Bahrein, I found Messrs. Wönckhaus were under-quoting us for London and Hamburg. I telegraphed to Bombay at the time that I was reducing the rate for London but not for Hamburg, as it appeared to me useless for us to reduce rates with transhipment to Hamburg against a direct service provided by the Hamburg American Line. At present the British Indian freight from Bahrein to Hamburg is 28*s.* 9*d.* per ton of 20 cwts. Out of this we pay 20*s.* per ton from Bombay to Hamburg; transhipment costs 3*s.* 4*d.*, and there is left to the British India Company as freight from Bahrein to Bombay about 5*s.* 5*d.* out of which to pay agent's commission and coolie hire at both ends. I shall endeavour to get the Bombay-Hamburg freight reduced below 20*s.* per ton of 20 cwts., but I doubt very much if they will do so, as shells in bags take up a lot of space and owners do not care much for them.

"The Hamburg-American Line charge 27*s.* Bahrein to Hamburg direct. They

would get the whole trade on account of the direct shipment but for the fact that Messrs. Gray, Mackenzie, and Co. ship as much as they can conveniently by British Indian."

We are, &c.
(Signed) MACKINNON, MACKENZIE, AND CO.,
Managing Agents.

[4861] No. 54.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.**

(No. 53.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 7, 1908.*

I TOLD Count Benckendorff to-day that we had information that eighteen large guns and thirteen train-loads of ammunition and arms were being sent from Beyrout towards the Persian frontier, and from other sources I heard of great preparations which looked as if the Turks intended military operations on a large scale.

If this was so, the results might extend and involve British interests, and our hand might be forced, and we should have to consider what measures ought to be taken.

Should this happen, I would inform the Russian Government in advance. It would be well for them to consider what measures they would be prepared to take, so that we might arrange to act simultaneously.

At present, I had no suggestions to make as to further action, but I thought it well to let the Russian Government know in advance that the situation seemed to be getting worse.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[4401] No. 55.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 34.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 7, 1908.*

THE following telegram has been received from the British Vice-Consul at Van, dated yesterday evening:—

"A quarrel having recently arisen among Armenian revolutionaries, one of them turned informer and showed the authorities where they had hidden a quantity of arms and ammunition.

"The troops yesterday seized nearly 300 rifles and 300,000 cartridges, without any excitement being created. A force of about 100 troops and gendarmes, conducted by the traitor, this afternoon continued their search among the houses in a street situated in the garden quarter, where they found a large quantity of dynamite and some arms and ammunition; during this time the revolutionaries, who were anxious to kill the traitor before he should have time to do any more harm, armed, assembled, and after having surrounded the troops, threw three bombs at their leaders. An organized attack on the troops followed, and brisk fighting went on for three hours, till it became too dark to continue. At present the revolutionaries occupy houses next this, and intend, I believe, to disperse during the night. There were, I believe, many soldiers wounded, and seventeen killed.

"The Vali will, I am sure, do what is best, and the town is at present quiet and the troops well in hand, but the Armenians are in a state of panic."

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* Also to Sir A. Nicolson (No. 32).

[4509] No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 35.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 8, 1908.*

THE following telegram has been received from Vice-Consul at Van, dated the 7th February:—

"Revolutionaries dispersed during the night. I am told they are hidden in houses in gardens in tactical positions, and mean to resist any further attempt at searching.

"I went to the Vali with my Russian and French colleagues this morning, and asked his Excellency to take steps for preventing Bashi Bazouks and Moslems generally from entering the disturbed quarter, and also to take other measures for the public safety. General Officer Commanding and Vali are most amenable to our representations. The crowd has been dispersed, and the measures which we recommended have been promptly carried out. Troops occupy the streets, and the town is everywhere quiet. I am assured by the Vali that Kurds will not enter town, and that there is quiet outside the town.

"The traitor is said to have been killed and the troops to have had seventeen killed and wounded."

[4708] No. 57.

Report on Affairs in the Mush Plain by Vice-Consul Dickson, sent home in Sir N. O'Conor's No. 57 of February 5.—(Received at Foreign Office, February 10, 1908.)

FROM certain facts that have come to my knowledge, I am inclined to believe that the Turkish military authorities are intending to make a military base on the Mush Plain.

The advantages of this, from a strategic point of view, I think will be apparent to any one studying the situation.

All the Turkish military efforts seemed to be directed against a Russian invasion of Erzeroum and Anatolia. In the case of such an invasion, the Bitlis Pass must play an important rôle, and there is no doubt that the Turks would make a great effort to hold it, and for this purpose as well as for other reasons the 5th Army Corps from Damascus will probably be brought up. In fact, the 5th Army Corps, to take any useful part in the defence of Erzeroum or to resist the invasion of Anatolia, would have to enter the theatre of operations by the Bitlis Pass or the Kharput-Mush road. In either case the roads followed are narrow, bad, and difficult, and only small bodies of troops could be moved along them at the same time. This would necessitate a resting camp, to enable these small bodies to concentrate, &c., and generally to serve as a base of operations.

Bitlis is in a deep narrow valley with no facilities for a camp, whilst the Mush Plain, which is close by, has all the facilities for a large standing camp, such as open ground and plenty of water; it is a large wheat centre, and there are plenty of sheep in the district; wood can be brought from the hills of Khnit. Also Mush is at the junction of the roads from Kharput, Diarbekir, Mardin, and Mosul to Erzeroum.

The following are some of the reasons which induce me to think that the Turks have this idea in view:—

A *chaussée* is now under construction from Mush to Erzeroum.

A military hospital for 250 beds is being constructed at Mush, which the smallness of the present garrison does not justify, according to Turkish ideas.

Mills to grind corn for the military on a large scale are to be constructed at Mush, and to choose sites, &c., for this purpose, a German Staff officer attached to the Turkish army at Erzingan should have come to Mush this autumn, but he was prevented by illness from doing so.

I am informed that the sites for two batteries have been selected near Mush, and

I should be surprised if this did not interest the German Staff officer more than the mills.

There is a report that a bridge is to be constructed over the Karasu, near Mush, and on the Erzeroum road.

If this idea of mine is correct, it might serve to elucidate the reason of the Turkish oppression in the Mush Plain and Bulanuk, Akhlat, and Khinis districts.

Supposing that a Turkish force is beleagured in Erzeroum, and that the Russians have occupied the surrounding country, and that the 5th Army Corps from Damascus is being sent up to the concentrating base at Mush, it would greatly help the Russians if the above-mentioned districts were peopled by revolutionary Armenians, who might hamper the Turkish concentration. In any case, one can imagine that the Turks would feel more secure if these districts were peopled by Russophile Moslems. From my own experience, the Central Government do all they can in the Bitlis Vilayet to oppress the Armenians and to drive them from the Mush Plain, &c., while in the Van Vilayet, with the exception of being overtaxed, they are certainly not systematically oppressed by the Government, and even if they wanted to leave the country they are not allowed to. The Armenians in both vilayets are the same, except that the Van Armenians have the reputation of being the worst. From what I hear, the Armenian revolutionary movement in Mush, &c., is nearly extinct, while in Van, thanks to the late Vali Ali Bey's exertions, it is very flourishing. Thus it seems as if the Turks only wish to get rid of the Armenian population in the Mush Plain, &c.

As the Armenians leave these districts the authorities do their best to replace them by Russian Mohajirs and Circassians. The idea being, I presume, to keep these grain-producing districts under corn, but to settle a Russophile agricultural population on them. That these districts should continue to be cultivated is of great importance to both the civil and the military authorities. In the spring of 1907, almost the entire Armenian population of Mush Plain decided to emigrate to Russia, on account of the exceptional oppression to which they, more than others, are subject. The Government, contrary to their usual practice elsewhere, put no objection in the way of the migration, but it was stopped, I understand, by an intimation from the Russian Embassy that the emigrants would not be allowed to enter Russia as such. A serious situation was thus created, the results of which are still felt. This winter there is practically a famine in these districts, owing to the fields not having been sown in the spring. In spite of this, there are several important Kurd chiefs in these districts, officers of Hamidieh, and Mush Notables who, thanks to the facilities given them by the Government, have been able to amass large depôts of grain, and this at a time when the price is five or six times the price of seven years ago. The population, Moslem and Christian alike, complain of these people, who are practically making a corner in grain, but the Government do nothing, except in the cases where the speculators are not Hamidieh or military contractors, and everything tends to show that, and, so I have been informed, these Hamidieh chiefs have been given these facilities to get the corn in return for some contract in which they are obliged to have a certain store of corn laid by for military purposes in time of war.

Another point which may or may not have significance is that various notables of Mush are interesting themselves in the question of importing agricultural machinery, &c., with the object of increasing the grain supply in the districts.

To summarize, it appears to me that the Turks are trying to replace a hostile Armenian population in the Mush Plain, Bulanuk, Akhlat, and Khinis districts by a Russophobe agricultural Moslem population, these districts being of strategical importance to the Turks.

Also they are allowing several big Hamidieh chiefs to collect large stores of grain in a time of famine.

These, with the other reasons given above, lead us to suspect that the Turks intend to make a military base at Mush.

(Signed) B. DICKSON, *Captain, R.A.*

Van, December 25, 1907.

[4534] No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 10.)

(No. 54. Confidential.)

Sir, *Pera, February* 4, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 25 of the 17th ultimo on the state of Armenia, and my representations with a view to inducing the Porte to take measure to restrain the lawlessness of the Hamidié Kurds, I have the honour to report that the Grand Vizier informed me yesterday that the punitive force sent to the Sert district of the Bitlis Vilayet had encountered opposition from some Kurdish Chiefs, but that the commander of the force, acting under instructions, had brought up artillery and bombarded the fortified villages of the Kurds, four of whose leaders had been killed, and others taken prisoners. Similar vigorous action has, his Highness informed me, been taken against Kurds in the Kharzan district of Bitlis, where also some prominent Kurds were killed in the course of the operations.

The Grand Vizier declared that the Government was determined to continue these energetic measures, and to repress the depredations of the tribal Kurds.

While congratulating his Highness on his vigorous action against the predatory and lawless action of the Kurds I expressed the earnest hope that this policy would now be carried out, and that by a wise and statesmanlike course he would secure the Armenian population in their civil rights and liberties, and prevent the extermination of the race which was the mainstay of the commercial and economic development of these provinces.

Speaking privately and confidentially, the Grand Vizier confessed that during the course of last year, when I had made representations regarding the state of the eastern Anatolian provinces, he had realized the deplorable state of things there, and felt the necessity of adopting remedial measures, but that such was far from being the case in the Macedonian provinces, where, apart from the activity of the rival bands, the authorities had used every endeavour to redress legitimate grievances with the result that no glaring abuses now existed. His Highness was ready to admit the need of reforms in the Armenian vilayets, but felt convinced that the demands of the Powers for judicial reform in Macedonia were entirely uncalled for and unjustifiable. "Justice," his Highness added, "cannot be controlled without ceasing to be justice."

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[4541] No. 59.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 10.)

(No. 61.)

Sir, *Constantinople, February* 5, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 701 of the 19th November, 1907, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from the Acting British Consul-General at Smyrna, reporting that the notorious brigand Chakorjee has come to terms with the Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 59.

Acting Consul-General Smith to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15.)

Sir, *Smyrna, January* 30, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that the famous brigand Chakerjee has now come to terms with the Government.

He has held out for and obtained a full pardon from the Sultan. In addition he is to receive himself £ T. 10 a-month, and each of his nineteen followers will be paid £ T. 5 a-month. He will leave his former haunts near Eudemish, and is being given a village and small district to the south, near Melas. Into this zone no Ottoman soldiers will have the right of entry; no taxes will be paid for some years; in fact, Chakerjee will be at the head of an autonomous community.

Some ten days ago five Albanians attacked a village near Eudemish which had been in Chakerjee's "sphere of influence." They killed six and wounded seventeen of the villagers. As Chakerjee had just had his terms accepted by the Government he could not take his revenge, although it was known that the Albanians had raided the village owing to a vendetta between themselves and Chakerjee, who has an inveterate enmity against the Albanians.

The latter, however, have been pursued by the troops, and two have been killed and one captured.

It is definitely reported that a new band of some seven or eight men has been seen in a region to the north of Smyrna, between Phokia and Menemen. Hitherto, however, this band has not done any damage.

No other bands are known to be about just now, but it may well be that it is merely owing to the rigours of winter. The same fear as to their presence prevails, and precautions taken accordingly.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. E. HEATHCOTE SMITH.

[4696] No. 60.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 10.)

Sir, *India Office, February* 8, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 5th instant, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the proposal of Secretary Sir E. Grey to instruct His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to request that the Kaïmakam's apology be made to the Commander of the next British war-ship that may touch at El Katif.

Mr. Morley would be glad to receive an early intimation, if such instructions are issued, in order that the Government of India may be informed.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[4509] No. 61.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 25.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February* 10, 1908.

ARMENIA. You should express approval of the action of His Majesty's Consul at Van, as reported in your telegram No. 35 of the 8th February.

[4920] No. 62.

Memorandum respecting British Interests in the Persian Gulf.

[NOTE.—Apart from Confidential correspondence, which is throughout expressly indicated by marginal notes, the following works have been consulted, both for purposes of reference and quotation:—

1. Bombay Records, volume 24.
2. Aitchison's Treaties, volume 10.
3. Low's "History of the Indian Navy."
4. Elisée Reclus' "Nouvelle Géographie Universelle."
5. Bennett's "Past and Present Connection of England with the Persian Gulf."
6. Lord Curzon's "Persia."
7. Foster's "Letters received by the East India Company from its servants in the East."
8. Barbier de Meynard's "Dictionnaire Géographique et Historique de la Perse."]

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PART I.—GENERAL SUMMARY.

SOME five years ago a Minister of the Crown declared in Parliament that "the ascendency of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf"—which he pronounced to be the foundation of British policy—"was not merely a question of theory, it was a statement of fact."

Exception has not infrequently been taken to the position of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf upon the ground that, without a shadow of right, she has constituted herself the general arbiter and guardian of that part of the world.

As such a description of our status—which appears to represent a view widely prevalent abroad—may not improbably be adopted by foreign Powers when increasing interest leads them to assume a definite attitude on this question, it appears desirable

* Separate Memoranda respecting "Quarantine" and the "Arms Traffic" are in course of preparation.

to collect, in a form convenient for reference, the salient facts of our historic association with the Gulf, and to summarize the views expressed by the Government of India and by successive Governments at home—views which are remarkable for unanimity, and which have now well-nigh acquired the sanction of an axiom in the direction of British policy.

It is with this purpose that the present Memorandum, which is merely a compilation of leading and largely *verbatim* extracts from authoritative sources,* has been drawn up.

Government of India. Secret despatch of September 21, 1899, *verbatim.*

The *de jure* position in the Persian Gulf is that of a sea open to the flag of all nations, the northern shores and territorial waters of which are included in the dominions of Persia, while its western and southern coasts are partially owned and partially claimed by Turkey, or are in the occupation of Arab tribes, who have entered into Treaty relationships of varying character, constituting a sort of veiled Protectorate, with Great Britain. The islands in the Gulf are owned either by Persia or by Arab Chiefs (in the case of Bahrein under British protection); but upon one of the Persian islands, viz., Kishm, Great Britain possesses a piece of land by virtue of an original grant from the Imam of Muscat, to whom the island once belonged. Outside the entrance to the Persian Gulf, but included in the same political system, are, on the northern shore of the Arabian Sea, the coasts of Persian Baluchistan, along which the overland wires of the Indo-European Telegraph Company run as far as Jask, where a reserve of territory exists under an Agreement concluded in 1887 between the British and Persian Governments, and where a detachment of Indian troops, who had previously been stationed there between the years 1879 and 1887, was re-established in January 1898 in consequence of the murder of a British telegraph official and the disturbed state of Persian Baluchistan. To the south of the entrance to the Persian Gulf, but within the sphere of its political influence, the Arab State of Muscat has for years been predominantly controlled by British influence; its trade is similarly in Anglo-Indian hands; and its Ruler has not merely for years been subsidized by the Government of India, but in 1891 entered into an Agreement with the British Government not to alienate any portion of his dominions to any other Power.

Government of India, *vide supra, verbatim.*

The *de facto* position upon the waters and on the shores of the Persian Gulf reflects a more positive British predominance than the preceding paragraph might indicate. In the early years of the nineteenth century the Slave Trade was rampant in the Gulf, and the vessels of the Indian Marine were engaged in a long and arduous struggle with the Arab pirates who infested its southern coasts. This conflict, which was conducted entirely by British agency and means, without any help from the Persian Government, resulted in the establishment of Treaty relations with the great majority of the Arab Chiefs, under which they bound themselves to observe perpetual peace and to refer all disputes to the British Resident at Bushire. The *pax Britannica*, which has ever since, with rare exceptions, been maintained, is the issue of these arrangements and is the exclusive work of this country. Of similar origin were the soundings of the channels and the surveys of the shores of the Persian Gulf, which the navigators of all nations owe to the labours of a long line of naval officers of the Indian service. During the nineteenth century British trade acquired almost a monopoly of the foreign commerce of the Gulf ports. Indian Bunias from Shikarpur and other parts of Scind have settled in considerable numbers at Lingah, Bunder Abbas, Bushire, and Bahrein. Before the advent of the Belgian Customs officials at the former ports, and to this day at Bahrein, they have farmed the Customs. Foreign imports and exports for the most part are conveyed to and from the Gulf in British ships, more than one Anglo-Indian Company (the "British India," the "Bombay and Persia," and the "Anglo-Arabian and Persian Gulf") having maintained for years a merchant-steamer service between Karachi and Bussorah, touching at the Gulf ports on the way, whilst the rival ventures that have occasionally been attempted by foreign nations have uniformly failed and been withdrawn, with the recent exceptions of the heavily-subsidized vessels of the Hamburg-American line, and of the Russian Steam-ship Company, which maintains quarterly sailings from Odessa. Before the institution of the German service the statistics show that 93 per cent. of the numbers and tonnage of the steamers engaged was under the British flag.

Annual Series, No. 3858, July 1907.

* Two works, which would have been invaluable for reference, have not been available in the preparation of this Memorandum, viz.: "The Official Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf," by Mr. Lorimer, and a "Trade Report on Mesopotamia," by Mr. Lloyd.

The protection of the pearl fisheries, which are carried on by the Arab tribes under the time-honoured conditions, is an important feature of British policy. This subject is referred to in a subsequent portion of this Memorandum, dealing with matters of commerce.

Government of India, *vide supra.*

During the last forty years the maintenance of the submarine cables of the Indo-European Telegraph Company from Fao to Jask, and of the land lines from that place to Karachi, has also devolved upon the Indian Government, and has tended to increase an already preponderant influence over both the waters and the shores of the Gulf.

Latterly there has been a deliberate but necessary consolidation of our influence in certain quarters where trouble threatened or where rivalry was feared. At the north-west extremity of the Gulf the Government of India, under instructions from His Majesty's Government, have entered into engagements, dated 1899 and 1907, with the Sheikh of Koweit, by which he has bound himself and his successors not to receive the Representative of any other Power and not to alienate any portion of his territory to the Government or subjects of any other Power, while, on the other hand, he has granted to His Majesty's Government certain prior rights in regard to the leasing of any portion of the foreshore of his territory. The first of these Agreements was dictated by the increasing encroachment of Turkish authority; the latter was due to a determination on the part of His Majesty's Government to promote the participation of Great Britain in the Bagdad Railway upon favourable terms.

At Bahrein a step was taken in the direction of protecting British interests and those of the local Sheikh by the appointment of a regular Political Agent, whose beneficent influence has already begun to make itself felt, notably in the settlement of judicial disputes. The more effective application of this influence is now under consideration, with a view to meeting the increasing requirements of European intercourse; while the reform of the Customs administration, and the proper control of the resulting revenue, has continued to occupy for some time the attention of the Government of India.

Government of India, *vide supra.*

Such, briefly summarized, is the position that has been won by Great Britain, not without the expenditure of many millions of money and the sacrifice of many valuable lives, in the Persian Gulf. In its vindication this country has more than once been called upon to enter into military occupation of ports or islands in the Gulf. The Island of Kharak was occupied by Indian forces from 1838–42, and again in 1856–7. Bushire was held during the latter years, as also were Mohammerah and Ahwaz upon the Karun. The occupation of these places was an illustration of the vigour with which, in past years, our ascendency has been maintained. Their abandonment was a proof of the reluctance which has invariably been displayed to emphasize or to perpetuate those responsibilities.

Mr. T. J. Bennett's Paper (see list).

The situation of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf has been well described as unique; for although, with the slight exceptions referred to, she has at no time enjoyed, or even asked for, territorial acquisitions in those regions, she has for generations borne burdens there which no other nation has ever undertaken anywhere, except in the capacity of sovereign; she has had duty thrust upon her without dominion; she has kept the peace amongst people who are not her subjects; has patrolled, during upwards of two centuries, waters over which she has enjoyed no formal lordship; has kept, in strange ports, an open door through which the traders of every nation might have as free access to distant markets as her own.

If Great Britain has become, in any sense, the arbiter and guardian of the Gulf, it has not been through a restless ambition urging her on to the control of the waste places of the earth, but in obedience to the calls that have been made upon her in the past to enforce peace between warring tribes, to give a free course to trade, to hold back the arm of the marauder and the oppressor, to stand between the slave-dealer and his victim.

PART II. POLITICAL.

NOTE.—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and Consul-General at Bushire.

This official *qua* Political Resident is under the Indian Government; *qua* Consul-General under the Foreign Office. The cost of his establishment is divided between the British and Indian exchequers.

As a Consular officer, the Political Resident receives His Majesty's commission as Consul-General for the Provinces of Fars, Khuzistan, and Luristan, and the district of Lingah, and for the coasts and islands of the Persian Gulf, being within the dominions of Persia. He resides at Bushire, and receives an office allowance of 120*l.* from Foreign Office funds.

The judicial powers and jurisdiction of the Political Resident are exercised, by virtue of his commission as Consul-General, under the Persian Coast and Islands Order in Council.

The Resident exercises an undefined but considerable influence upon the political affairs, more especially external, of Muscat, the Trucial States, Bahrein, and Koweit, at which places the Representatives of the Indian Government are under him.

(a.) *Muscat, including the Musandim Peninsula.*

At Muscat there is a Political Agent appointed by the Government of India, who also holds a commission as Consul, under the Foreign Office. The cost of the establishment is borne by Indian revenues.

Neither the coast-line nor the hinterland of the dominions of the Sultan of Muscat has ever been delimitated or accurately ascertained.

In the British Counter-Case, presented to The Hague Tribunal in the Muscat Dhows Arbitration in 1905, it is stated that the southern limit on the coast-line of Arabia reached by the Sultan's dominions is near Ras Sair or Sajir. At Rakhiout (17° 15′ south by 53° 25′ east), a place near this point, the Sultan's Vali has built a fort.

From Rakhiout up to the town of Muscat, the coast-line is continuously and admittedly under the sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat. North and west of the town of Muscat the coast-line is under the undoubted dominion of the Sultan as far as Khor Kalba. The Sheikh of Shargah claims authority over the coast-line north of this point as far as Ras Dibba, as being part of the territories of the Jowasmi tribe. For many years this district—which is known as the Batineh coast—has been regarded as feudatory of the Sheikh of Shargah, and the coast itself as subject to the Maritime Truce which will be mentioned hereafter. This territory has never been under the sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat, and it is admitted in the French Case in the Muscat Dhows Arbitration that it is under the government of the Sheikh of the Jowasmi, residing at Ras-el-Kheimah.

The following passage, which constitutes an important admission on the part of His Majesty's Government, is a *verbatim* extract from the British Counter-Case above referred to:—

"From Ras Dibba to Tibba (Tibat) the coast forming the promontory of Musandim is claimed by the Sultan of Muscat, who has certainly before and since 1864 exercised authority on that coast by his Vali and in other ways; and his rights on the coast are recognized by the Sheikh of Shargah and the Jowasmi."

A detailed account of the territory in question, which comprises Elphinstone Inlet and the Makkah Isthmus, is contained in a letter from the Political Agent at Muscat, dated the 2nd July, 1902. A Minute by Lord Curzon, dated the 6th October, 1902, also deals with the question. Major Cox expressed the view that the Sultan's jurisdiction was of so uncertain and ineffective a character that it would be open to His Majesty's Government either to recognize or to ignore its existence, as might be found most convenient; but Mr. Lorimer, who made investigations on the spot, controverted this view. The passage quoted finally disposes of all future ambiguity as to territorial jurisdiction.

Mr. Lorimer, March 25, 1905.

The predecessors of the present Sultan occupied territory for a good many years on the Persian coast from Bunder Abbas to Lingah with the Island of Kishm, under a Firman of the Shah of Persia, to whom they paid rent or tribute. In 1855 a lease for twenty years was granted at an annual rent. In 1868 a new arrangement was made for seven years, also at a rent, but, on the occasion of civil war in Muscat in 1868, the Shah cancelled the lease, under powers given by the Convention, and resumed occupation of the territory in question.

Government of India Secret despatch of March 2, 1899 (extract).

Gwadur is an enclave on the confines of Persia and Beluchistan, which has for over 100 years formed part of the dominions of the Sultan of Muscat, to whom it was granted by the Khan of Khelat. It extends for a radius of one stage (about 10 or 15 miles from the town of Gwadur). In this territory is a station of the Indo-European telegraph, but it has never been occupied by Great Britain.

Mr. Murray, No. 12, January 16, 1856. Mr. Alison, No. 49, April 7; No. 103, July 29; No. 106, August 4, 1868. Mr. Thomson, No. 65, September 8; No. 70, October 19; No. 89, November 26, 1869.

The British connection with Muscat is of long standing. Treaties of Friendship and Commerce, as well as for the suppression of slavery, have been concluded with successive Imams of Muscat on different occasions since 1798. In that year the first engagement was entered into between the East India Company and Saiyid Sultan for the exclusion from his territories of French influence, which contemplated finding in Muscat a convenient basis of attack upon India in the war then being waged between Great Britain and France. At a later date, on the death of Saiyid Said in 1856, a dispute arose between his two sons as to the possession of Muscat and Zanzibar, which had hitherto been united under the same Ruler. This was referred to the arbitration of the Viceroy of India, then Lord Canning, who, after careful inquiry, decided that the two States should remain separate, being divided between the two brothers, but that Zanzibar, in virtue of its superior wealth, should pay to Muscat a yearly subsidy of 40,000 crowns (5,760*l.*). At a subsequent period, in 1873, the British Government, in return for Agreements concerning the suppression of the Slave Trade, successfully concluded with the Rulers both of Muscat and Zanzibar, undertook to relieve the latter of this payment, which has since that date been made by the Government of India almost without intermission* to the reigning Sultan of Muscat. The Sultan was to receive this subsidy "so long as he continued faithfully to fulfil his Treaty engagements, and manifest his friendship towards the British Government." It appears, indeed, that since the time of Saiyid Said no Sultan of Muscat has been able effectively to establish his position without obtaining the recognition of the British Government. Throughout this period the Government of India have on several occasions been called upon to intervene in the dynastic disputes of the Muscat State. Claimants or pretenders have been interned in India, have been prevented from attacking a reigning Sultan, have been given allowances, and have been otherwise treated with marks of wise and beneficent interest. Thus, in 1874, in 1877, 1883, 1886, 1888, 1890, and again in 1895 and 1896, His Majesty's Government afforded the Sultan valuable and effective support in the maintenance of stable government.

Government of India Secret despatch, *vide supra.*

This catalogue of services rendered by the British Government to successive Rulers of Muscat, and notably to the present occupant of the throne, the annual payment of a subsidy contingent upon the loyal fulfilment of Treaty obligations, and the history of the influence thereby exercised by Great Britain for a period of over half a century upon the fortunes of the State, at once explain and justify the existence of a positive political predominance on the part of Great Britain, that is shared by no other Power in the affairs of Muscat. While not compromising the independence of its Sovereign, which both the British and French Governments have reciprocally bound themselves, by a declaration made in the year 1862, to respect, this condition of affairs has yet been the inevitable outcome of the physical situation of the country, of its contiguity to the shores of India, and of its close proximity to the waters of the Persian Gulf, in which British interests, political and commercial, have exercised so commanding an influence.

In the ports and territory of Muscat itself this predominance has been accentuated by the facts that the trade of the British dominions with Muscat amounts to about

* (1.) There was an intermission in 1888–90, consequent on the death of Sultan Seyyid Turki, and pending the complete recognition of his successor.

(2.) There was a very short intermission from December 1898 to September 1899, pending the settlement of unpaid balances of indemnity (arising out of losses to British subjects during Abdullah-bin-Suleh's rebellion) and of two loans. (British Counter-Case, Section VIII.)

five-sixths of the entire trade of the country; that the latter is almost exclusively in the hands of Indian traders, who are British subjects; that the commerce and interests of any other country are relatively insignificant; that the share of the trade enjoyed by the three other Powers with whom Muscat has direct Treaty relations, viz., America, France, and Holland,* amounts, if added together, to less than one-seventeenth of the entire trade of the country.

The relations of amity which have been above recorded culminated in 1891 in an Agreement voluntarily entered into by Seyyid Feysal-bin-Turki, G.C.I.E., the present Sultan, following immediately upon the conclusion of a new Commercial Treaty between Great Britain and Muscat, by which he undertook never to cede, to sell, to mortgage, or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government, the dominions of Muscat and Oman or any of their dependencies.

In 1894 a French Vice-Consul was appointed at Muscat, and this official made it his first aim to alienate the sympathy of the Sultan from Great Britain. The action of France was believed to be inspired to a large extent by Russia, who was credited with designs of an aggressive naval policy in the Gulf. It would be tedious to retail the circumstances under which this action was exerted. Suffice it to say that matters reached a crisis in 1899, when it transpired that an Agreement had been concluded with the French Government, in March of the preceding year, for the lease of a coaling station at Bunder Gisseh, a place 5 miles south-east of Muscat.

This action was held to constitute a violation of the Agreement of 1891 with Great Britain.

Owing to this and the breach of other Treaty stipulations, and of personal assurances formally entered into by the Sultan, a Memorandum was presented to him on the 3rd February, 1899, by the Government of India, which, after recapitulating the engagements of the Sultans of Muscat to Her Majesty's Government, and the acts of friendliness and of material support afforded to them, particularly in checking the attacks of hostile tribes on Muscat, made the following demands upon the Sultan:—

(*a.*) The abrogation of a cession of a piece of territory for a coaling station to France (to which he had agreed without the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government).

(*b.*) The dismissal of a confidential adviser, Abdul Aziz, who was notoriously inimical to British interests.

(*c.*) Payment of interest on certain sums due as an indemnity to British subjects.

(*d.*) Cessation of the levy of taxes on British subjects which were not compatible with his Treaty engagements.

(*e.*) The issue of orders to his subjects for the exclusive use of the Muscat flag.

Under threat of force the Sultan formally complied with these terms, and wrote to the French Consul declining to receive Abdul Aziz (who was the Consul's Munshi) as French Agent.

About this time the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown was sought as to certain aspects of the Anglo-French Declaration of 1862, engaging Great Britain and France to respect the independence of the Sultan of Muscat.

They expressed themselves as follows:—

"1. The Declaration of 1862 does not in our opinion require the British Government to abstain from exercising a preponderating influence in Muscat, so long as that influence is not exerted in any way inconsistent with the independence of Muscat. For instance, the subsidy, and the terms on which it was made payable, involved no breach of the Declaration.

"2. We think that the British Government would be justified in punishing or even deposing a particular Sultan who broke his engagements with the British Government. The undertaking contained in the Declaration is an engagement to respect the independence of the Sovereigns of Muscat as representing the country, and does not carry with it an inability to punish any particular Sovereign for breaches of Treaty or of international law. For this the consent of France is not necessary. But it would be a breach of the Declaration if after deposing a particular Sultan a successor were set up who was not independent.

"We should add that, whilst the question whether the Sultan could consistently with the

* The dates of the respective Treaties are: United States of America, 1833; France, 1844; Netherlands, 1877.

An Arrangement respecting trade jurisdiction, wrecks, &c., was concluded by the Portuguese Governor-General of Mozambique in February 1826.

Declaration be required to dismiss a particular adviser must depend on the special circumstances of the case, it is hardly compatible with the independence of Muscat that the Sultan should be compelled to accept Ministers and advisers who are acceptable to the British Government.

"(Signed) RICHARD E. WEBSTER.
ROBERT B. FINLAY.

"*Law Officers' Department, March* 8, 1899."

With regard to the French coaling station at Bunder Gisseh, Her Majesty's Government expressed both to His Highness the Sultan and to France the view that the sale or lease of any part of His Highness' dominions to a foreign Power was not only a breach of the Sultan's Agreement with Great Britain of 1891, but was also inconsistent with the Declaration concluded between the British and French Governments in 1862. The Government of the French Republic accepted the British reading of the latter instrument, viz., that neither State might accept any cession or lease of Muscat territory; and it was agreed that France should be free to establish a coal depôt on the same terms as those granted to Great Britain, viz., on sufferance, and such a depôt has been established in Muscat Harbour on a portion of the ground originally allotted to Great Britain for the purpose. The result, therefore, of British action was to prevent a lease or cession of territory to France in contravention of the Declaration of 1862, which would otherwise have taken place. In other words, the British protest, so far from being a breach of that Declaration as argued by the French Government, prevented its breach by France.

Vide British Counter-Case, Muscat Dhows Arbitration.

Grant of French flags to Muscat Dhows.

France has always refused to permit the exercise by the war-ships of any other Power of the *droit de visite* on the high seas as regards ships carrying the French flag, and, by only partially ratifying the Brussels General Act in 1892, she preserved this claim to resist the right of search.

The French officials in Obokh, Madagascar, and the Comoros have granted, from time to time, French ships' papers and flags to subjects of the Sultan of Muscat, and the same course has been taken by the French Consuls at Aden, Muscat, and Zanzibar. Most of the Omanis who thus received French papers belonged to the district of Jalani and the town of Sur, within Muscat territories. These men were neither of French nationality nor naturalization; they had no authority from the Sultan to change their allegiance, and they had no permanent residence or settlement in French territory, but merely paid fleeting visits thereto for the purpose of renewing their licences.

Many of these flagholders engaged in the Slave Trade. Moreover, on returning to the waters and territory of Muscat, they claimed that the Sultan was not entitled to board or search their vessels, or to exercise any jurisdiction over them, and that they were entitled to be treated as French protégés, and to be exempt from his laws as regards customs, quarantine, and other matters.

The Sultan of Muscat never admitted that the grant of French flags or papers was warranted by Treaty or usage, and made repeated protests on the subject. He appealed to His Majesty's Government, who on several occasions made representations to the French Government.

Finally, it was decided that the whole question of the grant of French flags to subjects of the Sultan should be submitted to the arbitration of the International Court at The Hague.

The following two points were submitted to the decision of the Tribunal, which met at The Hague on the 24th July, 1905:—

(*a.*) The scope of the reciprocal Declaration made by Great Britain and France in 1862 in relation to the issue by France to subjects of the Sultan of papers authorizing them to fly the French flag; and

(*b.*) The nature of the privileges and immunities claimed by subjects of the Sultan who were owners or masters of dhows and possessed French papers, or were members of the crew of such dhows, and their families, especially as to the manner in which such privileges and immunities affected the jurisdiction of His Highness over his said subjects.

The results of the Award may be summarized as follows:—

France may renew the licences to fly the French flag granted to owners of dhows before the 2nd January, 1892. But no licences given since that date are valid unless the grantee was a *bonâ fide* French protégé before 1863.* This decision will, it is believed, reduce the number of French flagholders to ten, or twelve at the utmost. Moreover, the licences in question cannot be transmitted or transferred to any other dhow, even if belonging to the same owner. Thus, it would appear that if one of the licensed dhows were to be lost or disabled, the owner, in order to obtain a new licence, must prove that he comes under the category of those who were *bonâ fide* French protégés before 1863. Such protégés must now be scarce, and the number of French flagholders should, in the course of a few years, be reduced to vanishing point.

Muscat Customs.

Administration Report on the Persian Gulf Political Residency and Muscat Political Agency for 1903–1904.

The administration of the Muscat Customs is under the direct management of the local Government. In the last few years the Sultan has shown a ready inclination to profit by Western ideas, and there is every reason to hope that enlightened progress will ultimately be made in the matter of the Customs. At present the system by which sudden calls on the State Exchequer are met by drafts upon the Customs Superintendent is liable to place that official in frequent difficulties, and to prevent him from doing full justice to his charge.

Letter from Political Agent, Muscat, to Resident in Persian Gulf, No. 352, dated September 11, 1901.

The Sur Customs should be an important factor in the Sultan's revenue, but the French flag question made it impossible for some time for the Ruler of Muscat to bring the administration of Sur to that state of reasonable efficiency which its importance as a trade emporium demands.

The Gwadur Customs, too, are a source of annoyance to the Sultan. Ever since the late Khoja contractor was ousted from the Customs farm, and the collection of customs dues resumed by the Sultan, constant dissensions have occurred between the mercantile community and Customs officials regarding the tariff.†

India Office, February 14, 1905.

For many years the Indian Government have been desirous of placing the Muscat Customs under the superintendence of a British official. In 1905 they suggested that an arrangement should be proposed to the Sultan of Muscat for the appointment of a British head Customs officer. This official was to be nominated by the Indian Government and appointed by the Sultan. But, although a servant of the Sultan, it was to be stipulated that, in cases of important differences of opinion between him and His Highness, the latter should agree to accept the friendly arbitration of the British Political Agent.

Another feature of the proposal was a guarantee by India of the Muscat Customs revenue to the extent of 20,000 dollars a month.

To India Office, March 23, 1905.

Circumstances were apparently favourable for such an arrangement, as the Sultan had become dissatisfied with his own administration of the Customs. Owing to disputes he was unable to obtain from that source sufficient funds even to send a steamer to Zanzibar. It appeared, however, to Lord Lansdowne that any considerable change in the internal administration of Muscat would afford the French Government grounds of complaint or a pretext for a counter-move. He considered that an arrangement might be made of a less far-reaching character than that proposed by the Government of India; and, in any case, he thought that the matter should be deferred until the conclusion of the Muscat arbitration.

India Office, November 28, 1905.

Later in the year the Sultan applied to the Indian Government for a loan, and it was suggested that compliance with this request might afford a reason for bringing up the question of a reorganization of the Customs. Negotiations were, however, then in progress for carrying into effect the Muscat Arbitration Award, and Lord Lansdowne considered that, pending their conclusion, it was inadvisable to deal with the loan on the proposed basis. He limited his approval to the grant of a small

To India Office, December 6, 1905.

To India Office, March 29, 1906 [10128].

* The year 1863 was taken as the date at which, in virtue of legislation by the Ottoman Porte, and of the Franco-Moroccan Treaty of that year, the creation of new protégés was regulated and limited.

† The Sultan visited Gwadur in person in February 1904 for the purpose of bringing about a settlement, in which he appears to have been unsuccessful. For a description of the tariff, see Administration Report for 1903–4.

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Sketch to illustrate positions of Flagstaffs at Elphinstone Inlet and Sheep Island (Musandim Peninsula)

W M Shakespear Lt

Asst. Resdt. and H.B.M's Consul

Bandarabbas.

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advance, in relief of the Sultan's pressing financial difficulties, repayable from his subsidy, without political conditions.*

Although the Sultan had promised to borrow only from His Majesty's Government, advances were obtained by him from M. Goguyer (a French merchant), the Khojas (Muscat subjects), and various firms, against future payments of customs dues. In August 1907 the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf reported that a further sum had been borrowed from M. Goguyer against the security of these dues. It seemed to him a good opportunity for official remonstrance, unless it might be considered better to wait until the termination of the French Flag case.

Inclosure 3 in India Office, March 21, 1906 [10128]. India Office, October 10, 1907 [38757].

The control of the Arms Traffic may not improbably evoke a wish in some quarters to internationalize the Muscat Customs Administration. It is perhaps therefore not unfortunate that in view of the state of the Sultan's financial affairs, and the recent conclusion of the Muscat Arbitration Award negotiations, occasion may soon occur for reviving the proposal to reorganize this Department under British auspices.

The Musandim Peninsula.

The following description of the Musandim Peninsula is taken from Lord Curzon's book on Persia:—

"Fifteen miles from the extreme point of Ras Musandim the promontory again narrows to an isthmus, named Maklab, not more than half a mile in width, by which it is united to the mainland. On the eastern side of this isthmus a splendid bay, called by the natives Ghubbeh Ghazireh, and by the English Malcolm's Inlet, sweeps in from the sea. On the western side is an even finer natural harbour, more completely landlocked, and providing anchorage for the largest vessels, known as Elphinstone's Inlet. The station of Khasab, at the entrance to this wonderful cave, has before now been recommended (amongst others by Sir Lewis Pelly) for permanent occupation by the British, as a naval base in the Persian Gulf. Here the entire British fleet might safely ride at anchor.

"When the telegraph cable was first being laid to the Persian Gulf in 1864, it was taken by what was then thought the shortest and best line from Gwadur to Cape Musandim. Entering Malcolm's Inlet, the wires were stretched across the Isthmus of Maklab, and re-entered the sea in Elphinstone's Inlet on the other side. But the drawbacks of the site, arising from the hot climate, the sterile neighbourhood, and the suspicions of the native tribes, compelled a retreat from the course adopted; and, in 1869, the cable was diverted to Cape Jask and Henjam."

In a despatch dated the 2nd May, 1901, the Government of India wrote:—

"The harbour of Elphinstone Inlet on the western side of the Musandim Promontory possesses many advantages, but we consider it less suitable (than Bassidu and Henjam) for our ultimate naval station at the mouth of the Gulf, because of its total lack of supplies and the uncivilized character of the aboriginal inhabitants. We should, however, see no objection to the hoisting of the British flag on the Isthmus of Maklab, not necessarily with the view of ulterior occupation, but in order to anticipate seizure by any other Power."

The question of the measures to be taken to prevent the occupation of the anchorages of this promontory by some other European Power was again raised by the India Office at an inter-Departmental discussion on various questions connected with the Persian Gulf on the 14th July, 1902. The Government of India, to whom the Report of the Committee was communicated, recommended in a despatch dated the 23rd October, 1902, that the British Resident in the Persian Gulf should be authorized to effect a reoccupation of the deserted telegraph buildings at Elphinstone

* The following loans have been made to the Sultan of Muscat from Indian revenues:—

1902. 1,50,000 rupees (10,000*l.*), advanced to Sultan for purchase of yacht.
1904. 30,000 rupees (2,000*l.*), on condition he was not to borrow elsewhere.
1906. 20,000 rupees (1,333*l.*), sanctioned, but apparently not taken advantage of, by His Highness.

These sums are being repaid by deductions from the Sultan's subsidy. In September 1906 (the latest information received) the balance due from the Sultan to the Government of India on account of the above was stated to be 19,791 rupees (viz., 31,791 rupees on account of the advance for the yacht; 18,000 rupees balance due on the other two loans).

Inlet by hoisting the British flag and posting a Native Agent there. The Admiralty, who were consulted by the Foreign Office, stated on the 31st January, 1903, that the Lords Commissioners saw no objection to the proposal.

On the 21st January, 1904, the Government of India embodied in a further despatch the conclusions arrived at by the Viceroy and the Naval Commander-in-chief on the East India Station, after Lord Curzon's tour in the Persian Gulf, as to the selection of naval positions.

Amongst other recommendations it was proposed that, in order to prevent any foreign flag being planted in the harbours of the Musandim Peninsula, Elphinstone Inlet should be reoccupied. It was suggested that the best way of effecting this reoccupation would be to erect a flagstaff on the isthmus which commands Elphinstone and Malcolm Inlets and on Telegraph Island, in the former inlet. It was also proposed, on the advice of the Admiral, that a flagstaff should be planted on Sheep Island, in the anchorage of Khor Kawi, on the western side of the peninsula, which is not only very commodious, but which might, it was suggested, some day be useful as a coaling station.

In a Report dated December 1903 Rear Admiral Atkinson-Willes had furnished details of Khor Kawi:—

"The Khor appears capable of sheltering several large cruisers besides a number of small craft. Its strategical position is excellent, and, in conjunction with the Islands of Kishm, Henjam, Larak, and Hormuz, it will form a strong position for the control of the entrance to the Gulf."

On the 26th November, 1904, the Viceroy reported that the flagstaffs had been erected.

On learning that the flagstaffs had been erected on the sites in question, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty demurred to the action which had been taken. They formulated their objections in the following terms:—

"My Lords cannot admit that the fact of their having offered no objection to the proposal to reoccupy Telegraph Island by placing there a Native Agent in charge of a British flag can be held to cover their unsolicited acquiescence in the proposed further distribution of flagstaffs in the district, one being on the mainland.

"The original proposal was simply a case of reverting to a state of things which had previously existed without question, to the renewal of which there was a reasonable answer in the event of objections being raised by European Powers, and in which there could be no question of territorial expansion, as the so-called island is nothing but a rock. As regards the other flagstaffs, it is a very different matter, and my Lords felt that if the flag was not intended to denote British territorial expansion, it not only meant nothing, but was a possible source of international complication."

In view of this expression of opinion the question was submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and their decision was conveyed to the Government of India in a despatch dated the 19th May, 1905. It was to the effect that the hoisting of flags was open to the objection that it would not confer upon this country any special rights in the places selected, unless it were accompanied by a specific proclamation of protectorate or annexation. On the other hand, an open assertion of British claims to these places might excite the jealousy of other Powers, and give rise to political complications. His Majesty's Government preferred to adhere to the alternative method of making it clear that they would not tolerate the occupation by any foreign Power of any port or territory in the Persian Gulf, and, in this connection, attention was directed to Lord Lansdowne's declaration, made in the House of Lords on the 5th May, 1903, that "we should regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very great menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal." In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government had arrived at the conclusion that the flagstaffs on Sheep Island and the Maklab Isthmus should be abandoned, while, in view of the result of Mr. Lorimer's recent inquiries, which tended to confirm the claim of the Sultan of Muscat to sovereignty over the territory in question, the Government of India were requested to furnish their views as to the maintenance of the flagstaff on Telegraph Island, which had been the site of the original cable station.

The Government of India replied in their despatch of the 26th September, 1907, that the flagstaff might conceivably be useful in certain circumstances, having regard to the German desire for an increase of influence in the Gulf, and for a telegraph line to the east; and as neither the Sultan of Muscat nor any foreign Power had ever taken exception to its existence, it seemed very improbable that any international

complications would arise from its maintenance in the future. The Government of India had already given it as their opinion that the erection of the flagstaff could not be regarded as contravening, in any way, the provisions of the Treaty of 1862, which binds both England and France not to trench on the independence of the Sultan of Muscat; and, in these circumstances, they recommended that no action should be taken beyond merely leaving the flagstaff on Telegraph Island where it was. No decision has yet been arrived at on this recommendation. The flagstaffs on Sheep Island and Maklab Isthmus were actually removed in October 1905.

In October 1907 an Inter-Departmental Committee, consisting of three delegates from the Admiralty and representatives of the Foreign Office and India Office, was convened to report on the feasibility of the Germans securing an outlet for the Bagdad Railway on the Persian Gulf independently of British co-operation. The Committee formed the opinion that such a consummation was feasible, and they concluded their Report in the following terms:—

"We do not, however, feel confident that we possess the means absolutely to debar Germany from acquiring an outlet on the Gulf; and this outlet, though at first commercial, might eventually be transformed into a strategic base, but by steps so gradual and clandestine as to render protests difficult or impracticable. In these circumstances we cannot but express the opinion that it is in the highest degree desirable to come to terms with the promoters of the Railway.

"Finally, we would advocate that all steps which His Majesty's Government may consider feasible should be taken to consolidate the advantages we already possess at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, notably at Musandim Peninsula (where the harbour accommodation and water supply are adequate) and at the Islands of Kishm and Henjam."

The Admiralty stated, in a letter dated the 9th November, 1907, that "their Lordships concur in the Report of the Committee, and they consider that, from a naval standpoint, it is most desirable that effect should be given at once to the Committee's particular recommendations relating to the steps to be taken by His Majesty's Government in the establishment of a definite position . . . . at the entrance to the Persian Gulf."

The Government of India suggested in their despatch of the 21st January, 1904, that it might be found desirable to erect a lighthouse on Musandim Peninsula.

Further correspondence on the subject took place in the course of the year, and was forwarded to the Foreign Office in the India Office letter of the 29th September, 1904. It appeared that the Government of India were of opinion that the light might be placed either on the rocky point of Cape Musandim or on one of the islands called the Quoins that are situated at a little distance from it; they considered that there were political advantages in placing the light upon a point of the peninsula, and they were accordingly disposed to prefer this locality. The British India Steam Navigation Company, who were consulted on the subject, expressed the view that a lighthouse at the extremity of the Musandim Peninsula would be of considerable help to shipping. They recommended that it should be constructed on Cape Musandim rather than on one of the Quoins Islands, provided that the land south of the point would not render the light invisible to ships proceeding up the Gulf.

On the 21st September, 1904, the Viceroy telegraphed to inquire whether it would be possible to secure the services of an expert through Trinity House to examine the scheme and also to report on the general question of the lighting of the Persian Gulf. This telegram was referred to the Foreign Office for Lord Lansdowne's observations, but action appears to have been suspended upon it until the question of the flagstaffs at Musandim had been settled, and, as the ultimate decision in regard to the latter was that they should be removed, the lighthouse question appears to have been allowed to drop.

The erection of a lighthouse might be of considerable service, both nautical and political, at Musandim. With regard to the erection of lights and the improvement of harbours in general, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf has expressed the view that, apart from their utilitarian aspect, they would undoubtedly do much to strengthen our already predominant position. The subject will be reverted to in Part III of this Memorandum (see p. 50).

If a lighthouse is built at Musandim a wireless telegraphy station might likewise be established. This would be of much advantage to passing vessels for purposes of signalling, and it is worthy of consideration whether similar stations should not be established at Bassidu, Bahrein, and on Kubbar Island near Koweit, and wireless installations supplied to His Majesty's ships in the Persian Gulf, with a view to the easier and more effective suppression of piracy.

(b.) *The Trucial Chiefs.*[*]

The British Government maintain no Political Officer in "Trucial" territory, but a Native Agent in the employ of the Bushire Residency is stationed at Shargah, and moves from place to place as is required.

The so-called "Trucial Chiefs," who rule over the Jowasmi, Al bu Ali and Beni Yas tribes, are six in number, and they respectively reside at Ras-el-Kheimah, Amulgavine, Ajman, Shargah, Dabai, and Abu Dhabi. All these places are situated on the Pirate Coast, which is part of the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf, and extends from a point between Tibba and Shuam to El Odeid. The Sheikh of Shargah also claims authority over the coast-line on the Gulf of Oman from Khor Kalba as far as Ras Dibba, on the ground that it is part of the territories of the Joasim tribe.

Aitchison's Treaties, Vol. X.

These Chiefs are called the "Trucial Chiefs" on account of the Treaties of Maritime Truce concluded with them between 1835 and 1853, by which their internecine strife upon the sea was stopped.

They are all now independent, and since the isolation of the Wahabees in the highlands, they have been exempted from the tribute or blackmail for the payment of which they were formerly directly or indirectly liable to the Wahabee Chief of Nejd.

In the beginning of last century an expedition was sent to the Persian Gulf to punish the Jowasmi for certain aggressions on British ships, and to co-operate with the Imam of Muscat who was then at war with them. The expedition resulted in the conclusion of a Treaty in February 1806, binding them to respect the flag and property of the British, and to assist vessels touching on their coast. This Treaty appears to have been concluded without reference to the Wahabees.

The spread of the Wahabees in Oman soon threatened the Ruler of Muscat with destruction, and the British Government determined to support him, and to destroy the piratical fleets as the only means of preserving the peace of the Gulf. A strong force was dispatched in 1809, which took Ras-el-Kheimah and other places and destroyed the boats of the pirates.

Notwithstanding these measures, piracy increased to an intolerable extent, and an expedition was therefore dispatched to the Persian Gulf, under Sir W. Grant Keir, in 1819 for the purpose of completely crushing them.

In 1820 the first general Treaty was signed between the British Government and the Chiefs, and of these or similar Agreements there have been in all no fewer than eight. In 1839 the Maritime Truce was concluded, and was renewed from time to time until the year 1853, when it was succeeded by the Treaty of Perpetual Peace which has lasted ever since. Under that Treaty it was provided that there should be a complete cessation of hostilities at sea between the subjects of the signatory Chiefs, and a "perfect maritime truce for evermore;" that, in the event of aggressions by any one by sea, the injured parties should not retaliate, but should refer the matter to the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, and that the British Government should watch over the peace of the Gulf and insure at all times the observance of the Treaty.

In 1892 a further Treaty was concluded separately with each of the Trucial Chiefs by which they agreed (1) not to enter into any Agreement or correspondence with any Power other than the British Government; (2) not to consent to the residence in their territories of the Agent of any other Government without the assent of the British Government; (3) not to cede, sell, mortgage, or otherwise give for occupation any part of their territory save to the British Government.

Vide Colonel Pelly's Report of April 1863.

So long ago as 1823 Captain McLeod, reporting on the Jowasmi tribe (being then at Rasel-Khaimah and Shargah), described them as "possessing no articles of export, since their pearls are generally purchased by merchants on the spot, and the produce of their country is not even sufficient for their maintenance. Their only employment is fishing, diving for pearls, and importing dates, grain, and other necessaries of life which they purchase with the price of those pearls. They are very poor, and perhaps can never find much employment in commerce unless in carrying for others, although it is said they at one time possessed a very extensive trade."

[*] A report on this subject by Colonel Kemball will be found in "Persia and Arabia," Part 12, p. 348 (March 1905).

Colonel (now General Sir Arnold) Kemball writing in 1845 remarked:—

"Upon the success of the pearl-fishing and the profits of the carrying trade which it brings into operation must depend the means of obtaining the positive necessaries of life and those trifling luxuries desirable to an Arab. It is needless to observe how materially their own condition, and, by an easily deduced corollary, the safety of the Gulf, might be affected by the failure of a single season. Hence the anxiety and care attended with great expense which has been devoted by our Government to the maintenance of perfect tranquillity and security on the pearl banks."

In his report dated April 1863 on the tribes of the Persian Gulf, Colonel Pelly, who was for many years British Resident, wrote as follows: —

"The settlements of these tribes are mainly dependent for subsistence upon the proceeds of their pearl-divings; they possess little territory. As to the pearl banks, these are held in common by the tribes, and thousands of boats collect there during the diving season to keep the peace. . . . Men must export what they can produce or spare, or else they must go without imports; if men situate like these Arabs do not export salt-fish and pearls, they must either turn pirates or starve."

In a Durbar, held at Shargah in November 1903, the Viceroy addressed the Chiefs as follows:—

Address of the Viceroy at public Durbar held at Shargah, November 21, 1903.

"Chiefs, Out of the relations that were thus created, and which, by your own consent, constituted the British Government the guardian of intertribal peace, there grew up political ties between the Government of India and yourselves, whereby the British Government became your overlords and protectors, and you have relations with no other Power. Every one of the States known as the Trucial States has bound itself, as you know, not to enter into any Agreement or correspondence with any other Power, not to admit the Agent of any other Government, and not to part with any portion of its territories. These engagements are binding on every one of you, and you have faithfully adhered to them. They are also binding in their reciprocal effect upon the British Government, and as long as they are faithfully observed by the Chiefs there is no fear that any one will be allowed to tamper with your rights or liberties.

"Sometimes I think that the record of the past is in danger of being forgotten, and there are persons who ask, why should Great Britain continue to exercise these powers? The history of your States and of your families, and the present condition of the Gulf, are the answer. We were here before any other Power in modern times had shown its face in these waters. We found strife, and we have created order. It was our commerce as well as your security that was threatened and called for protection. At every port along these coasts the subjects of the King of England still reside and trade. The great Empire of India, which it is our duty to defend, lies almost at your gates. We saved you from extinction at the hands of your neighbours. We opened these seas to the ships of all nations, and enabled their flags to fly in peace. We have not seized or hold your territory. We have not destroyed your independence, but have preserved it. We are not now going to throw away this century of costly and triumphant enterprise; we shall not wipe out the most unselfish page in history. The peace of these waters must still be maintained; your independence will continue to be upheld; and the influence of the British Government must remain supreme."

(c.) *Bahrein.*

From the eleventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth century the inhabitants of Bahrein, to whom a Persian and Arab descent has been variously assigned, appear to have been subject to Chiefs of their own race, though in the time of Alphonso de Albuquerque the island fell into the possession of the Portuguese, who were eventually deprived of it by a dependent Sheikh of Nejd. During part of the seventeenth century, and for twenty-five years in the latter half of the eighteenth, Bahrein paid tribute to the Shah of Persia. With the death of Karim Khan in 1779 the influence of Persia began to wane, and the petty Chiefs of the Gulf, whose lawlessness had been controlled by the strong hand of Nadir Shah and his immediate successors, were soon involved in contests for superiority.

Government of India's despatch of February 22, 1870 (Aitchison's Treaties, vol. xxiv.

A section of the Arab tribe of Uttoobees, which had already been settled at Zobara for some years, and had increased so rapidly in wealth and power as to be virtually independent, took advantage of the disturbed state of affairs to attack Bahrein in
1782. 1782. In the following year they accomplished the subjugation of the island, of which, under varying fortunes, they have retained possession ever since.

Under the resolute rule of Syed Sultan, the influence of Muscat had been
1799. steadily increasing, and in 1799, at the instance of the Beglerbeg of Fars, the Imam fitted out an expedition which ended in the reduction of Bahrein and the deportation of members of the leading families to Muscat. Those who escaped were not slow
1801. to make overtures to the Wahabees, and in 1801 by their aid recovered the island.

The influence of Syed Sultan proved, indeed, on his death to have been no more than personal; the ascendency in the Gulf was left with the Wahabees, and the Uttoobees, no less than the other Chiefs of the Littoral, were for some years
1805. completely under their control. In 1805, however, they tired of their allegiance, and were also disinclined to share in the piratical schemes which the Wahabees systematically encouraged. Their Sheikhs accordingly inquired from the British Resident in the Gulf whether if they retired from the mainland, and withheld their allegiance from the Wahabees, the British Government would supply them with a vessel or two, so as to enable them to remain undisturbed at Bahrein. The Resident recommended that the request should be granted, but the Bombay Government declined to interfere in the matter.

1815. In 1815 the Imam of Muscat attacked the island, but was repulsed with great loss.

At this time the Uttoobees had so far departed from their former policy as to encourage pirates to resort to their ports, in order to dispose of their plunder.

1820. In 1820 General Keir negotiated a Treaty with the brother Chiefs Sulman and Abdulla, who then ruled over the island, stipulating that every possible discouragement should be given to pirates, and admitting them to the benefit of the general Treaty with the friendly Arabs, concluded about the same time.

1822. In 1822 an Agreement was made by the British Resident at Bushire with the Prince of Shiraz, recognizing Bahrein as a dependency of the Province of Fars. This Agreement was entirely contrary to the views of the Government at Bombay, and letters were written to the Prince of Shiraz disavowing the Treaty in strong terms and announcing the recall of Captain Bruce. Not only did the Indian Government disavow the Treaty, but Mr. G. Willock, British Representative at Tabreez, reported that—

Mr. G. Willock, No. 1, January 25, 1822.

"Mirza Baugur, Anbie, who had been deputed to Court to obtain the ratification of the Treaty, did not meet with a favourable reception; and His Majesty the Shah, whilst refusing his accordance to the stipulations, expressed his displeasure that the Prince of Shiraz should have entered into any engagements with the British Government without his knowledge and injunctions."

Mr. Grant-Duff, No. 247, September 26, 1906.

The Treaty was therefore not ratified either by the Shah or by the Government of India. This is an important point, since as late as 1906 the Persian Government based their claim to Bahrein on the Treaty of 1822.

In 1824 the British Government mediated with success between Bahrein and the kindred house of Rahmah-bin-Jaubir of Demaum.

1825. In the following year Sulman died, and was succeeded by his son Khalifa, but the latter's uncle, Abdulla, managed to retain all real power in his own hands. The Imam of Muscat was in favour of active intervention on behalf of Khalifa; the Governor of Bombay warned him of the evils which would flow from such a step, but his advice proved unavailing. As, however, Khalifa was prompt in his opposition to the common enemy, the Imam was utterly routed, and the Uttoobees, elated by success, took the initiative, and protested their unwillingness to agree to any terms of
1831. peace which were not guaranteed by the British Government; finally, in 1831, the desultory warfare which had ensued fizzled out from inanition.

1839. In 1839, on the irruption of the Egyptian army into Nejd, Sheikh Abdulla won over the Commander, by the promise of an annual tribute, to undertake that he would not encroach on Bahrein. The British Government, who at this time were watching with anxiety the progress of the Egyptian troops, expostulated with the Sheikh on the way in which he was sacrificing his independence; he admitted, in answer, that he would be prepared to drop all further connection with the Egyptian Pasha and "avow himself a dependant of Great Britain," in return for a guarantee of protection.

The speedy withdrawal of the Egyptian army from Nejd made any further negotiations on this subject unnecessary.

The dissensions amongst the various members of the ruling family of Bahrein had by this time reached such a pitch as to give the greatest cause of anxiety for the safety of the Gulf. Khalifa died in 1834, and was succeeded by his son, Mahomed. Between the latter and his great-uncle, Sheikh Abdulla, there had always been jealousy, and in a short time civil war broke out, and finally led to the discomfiture of Abdulla and his expulsion from the island.

1845. In 1845 the British Government exerted their influence at Bahrein, when they objected to the interference of Persia, and ordered the exiled Sheikh Abdulla to abstain from disturbing the peace of the Gulf.

1847. In 1847 the ruling Sheikh, Mahomed-bin-Khalifa, offered allegiance to Great Britain, which, however, was refused, though he was assured of the continuance of the good-will and friendship of the British Government.

1848. In 1848 Abdulla died, but the feud with the Khalifa family was vigorously maintained by his son, Mahomed-bin-Abdulla; and the history of the period which
1859. intervened up to the time (1859) that the latter was declared a public enemy and confined by the Government of India in the fort of Assurghur, resembles in every essential the history of preceding days. Piratical outrages were frequent; the Resident's advice was asked only to be disregarded; agreements were broken as soon as made; trade languished; the common people were oppressed; the Wahabees, egged on by a restless ambition, aided and abetted Mahomed-bin-Abdulla; and, finally, when a descent on Bahrein was imminent, the British Government were compelled to expel the rival Sheikh from his asylum at Demaum.

Shortly afterwards the ruling Sheikh, on being remonstrated with on account of certain lawless acts, declared his allegiance first to Persia, and afterwards to Turkey. He was compelled by the British Resident to raise the blockade of the Wahabee ports
1861. which he had instituted, and, in 1861, a "Perpetual Treaty of Peace and Friendship" was concluded with him. By this the engagements entered into in 1820 were declared to be valid and in force, the Chief as "Independent Ruler of Bahrein" bound himself to abstain from prosecuting war, piracy, and slavery by sea, and the British Government on their part engaged to maintain the security of his territory against foreign aggression.

Mr. Herstlet's Memorandum of March 1874, p. 15.

Her Majesty's Government, having concluded this Treaty with the Sheikh as an independent ruler, informed the Persian Government of what had taken place, and refused to concur in a proposal made by the Shah that the sovereignty of Bahrein should be transferred to the Persian Crown. Sir H. Rawlinson, then Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, expressed in forcible terms how indispensable the maintenance
1869. of the Sheikh's independence (of Persia) was "to the successful working of those plans of maritime police in the Persian Gulf which we have been at so much pains and expense to establish."

1868. In 1868, in consequence of the intrigues of the Persian Government, who had encouraged the piratical faction, it was necessary for the Indian Government to take forcible action against the offending Chiefs, and a naval demonstration took place.
1869. In November 1869 further measures had to be adopted, two of the Chiefs were incarcerated in an Indian fortress, and, finally, Esa-bin-Ali, a member of the Khalifa family, was installed as ruling Sheikh of Bahrein, and has remained in power ever since.

In 1870 the Government of India wrote a full despatch reviewing the history of the island and emphasizing the importance of allowing no Persian claims to sovereignty to pass without firm remonstrance. The Duke of Argyll, then Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for India, concurred in this view.

1871. In the autumn of 1871, during the progress of the Turkish expedition against Nejd, the murder of a Turkish messenger by order of the Chief of Bahrein reopened the question of the Ottoman claim to the island. This claim Her Majesty's Government had already refused to recognize on three occasions, in 1839, 1851, and 1870. At the request of Her Majesty's Ambassador, the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs eventually repeated the verbal assurances, formerly given by Aali Pasha, that the Porte did not entertain any intention of obtaining supremacy over Bahrein, Muscat, or the independent tribes of Southern Arabia, nor contemplate any attack upon them. (*Vide* Sir H. Elliot's despatch No. 399 of the 4th November, 1871.)

In October 1873 a question arose regarding the enforced enlistment of natives of Bahrein into the Turkish Army. A note was accordingly addressed to the Turkish
1874. Ambassador on the 14th April, 1874, which after drawing his Excellency's attention to previous communications, distinctly stated that Her Majesty's Government did not

admit the claim of Turkey to consider Bahrein as part of the Ottoman Dominions, and that, if natives of that island applied to British Consuls in Turkey for protection, the latter could not refuse their good offices on behalf of such persons.

To Sir H. Layard, No. 763, June 3, 1879.

In June 1879 the British Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to make representations respecting a reported proposal to establish a Turkish coal depôt at Bahrein, and to urge the Porte to disavow the project. Action was also taken by the Indian Government in order to induce the Sheikh of Bahrein, in the event of the proposal being made to him, to act upon the advice of the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

Sir H Layard, No. 501, June 16, 1879.

India Office, September 26, 1879.

Admiralty, May 14, 1880.

An attempt was actually made in 1880 by a Turkish vessel to establish a coaling station at Bahrein, but was frustrated by the Sheikh, who refused permission for the undertaking.

1880.

As a result of this incident, the Sheikh was induced to conclude a Treaty with the British Government by which he undertook to abstain from entering into negotiations with any other Power, and to refuse permission to any other Government to establish agencies or coaling depôts on his territory.

1888–9.

In 1888–9 the Turkish claim to Bahrein was reasserted and refuted. The Ottoman Government were informed that any attempt to land on the island would be opposed by force (*vide* despatches No. 15 of the 26th January, 1888, and No. 121 of the 17th April, 1888, to Sir W. White).

1892.

A question of British protection over Bahreinese in Turkey arose in 1892 over the restitution of taxes levied at Bussorah, and Her Majesty's Ambassador reminded the Porte that, Bahrein being under British protection, Her Majesty's Government could not admit Turkish interference with the natives of the island.

To Sir C. Ford, No. 69, Telegraphic, November 10, 1892.

1852.

A landing of Turkish troops was again apprehended in 1892, but the Porte was once more informed that British ships would oppose any such attempt.

1892.

In 1892 an Agreement was made with the Chief of Bahrein providing against (1) conclusion of Treaties with foreign Powers, (2) residence of foreign Agents, (3) cession of territory.

1893.

The question of British protection of Bahreinese in the Ottoman Dominions again arose in 1893, and Her Majesty's Government maintained the right of British Consular Representatives to give their good offices to Bahreinese applying for them, and the Porte was subsequently informed that Her Majesty's Government would extend their protection to them whenever there was occasion.

To Sir C. Ford, No. 111, May 2, 1893.
To Sir C. Ford, No. 322, December 6, 1893.

1895.

In 1895 we forcibly dispersed, in the interests of the Bahrein Sheikh, a settlement of malcontents who had established themselves at Zobara, on the El Katr coast, under the Turkish flag. The Turks protested, but Her Majesty's Government stated in reply that "they did not recognize Turkish jurisdiction on the El Katr coast, and must repeat once more that all Turkish claims to Bahrein, which is under the protection of the Queen of England, are totally inadmissible."

Note verbale of August 12, 1895, and to Athens Pera December 5, 1895.

1896.

The intervention of British Consuls in Turkey on behalf of Bahreinese was again insisted upon in 1896.

Sir P. Currie, No. 141, February 10, 1896.

1898.

In 1898 the Indian Government formally recognized Sheikh Hamed as successor-designate to the Chiefship of the island.

India Office, January 5, 1899.

1900.

In 1900 a British Agent, Mr. Gaskin, was stationed at Bahrein instead of the

native representative. In January 1905 the Government of India appointed Captain Prideaux, an officer of the regular political service, to succeed Mr. Gaskin, who was of lower official *status*. Subsequently, they conferred upon Captain Prideaux the personal and local rank of Political Agent. An assistant surgeon was also appointed at this time, and, in addition to attending on the Agency staff, he is in charge of a hospital, recently erected at the cost of certain British Indian merchants, in commemoration of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria; a guard, consisting of four officers and twenty-four sepoys, was stationed in the island; and a launch was provided to enable the Agent to visit the outlying portions of his charge, and for service in the suppression of piracy in the shallower water which a British gun-boat cannot reach. The use of the launch will confirm our title to police the pearl banks.

India Office, November 6, 1905.

India Office, June 8, 1901.

1901.

The reason for these measures was explained by the Government of India in a despatch dated the 21st April, 1904:—

> The protection of the British Government had converted the island from a scene of chronic external aggression and intestine feud into a relatively peaceful and flourishing centre of industry and commerce; but, secure in the gratuitous enjoyment of the benefits thus conferred upon him, and oblivious of the past vicissitudes of the Khalifa family, the Chief had been induced, by the very moderation of the British Government, to the belief that his relations with them were of a kind involving no corresponding obligations on his part. The incorrectness of the Sheikh's attitude had been conspicuously noticeable in connection with the question of the Customs revenues (a point dealt with under a separate heading of this Memorandum). The Government of India were not then disposed on this account to have recourse to coercive measures, in the hope that the object in view would be effected by means which, if slower, might not prove less effective. They apprehended that the Sheikh would not be slow to recognize the significance of the means in question, and that a suitable officer would be able to bring pressure to bear in connection with the Customs question or any other matter. Apart, however, from affairs of domestic interest, the need for a more definite assertion of our position had recently come into greater prominence owing to the establishment of an enterprising German trader on the island, and by reason of the growing interest in this quarter displayed by foreigners of other nationalities.

The expectations of the Government of India as to the reformation of the Sheikh were unfortunately destined to be disappointed, and his incapacity as a Ruler found concrete expression in disturbances which took place in November 1904, when a German clerk was assaulted and several Persians were wounded.

India Office, November 29, 1901.

In the case of the German, as a result of the action of the British Agent, full compensation was paid and condign punishment publicly inflicted. As to the Persians, the Sheikh remained obdurate, and a naval demonstration took place. A Memorandum of demands—including payment of a fine, the banishment of certain individuals, the formation of a guard for the bazaar, and an admission that *sukhra*, or forced labour, should not be imposed on foreigners—was presented to the Sheikh, and acceptance of it was enforced.

India Office, January 18, 1905.

1905.

Admiralty, April 1, 1905.

India Office, October 20, 1905.

On the 27th July, 1904, the French Ambassador communicated a private Memorandum to Lord Lansdowne, suggesting that, as French citizens had established themselves at Bahrein for the purpose of pearl-fishing, the jurisdiction of the French Vice-Consul at Bushire should be extended to that island.

1904.

Memorandum communicated by M. Cambon, July 27, 1904.

The India Office were disposed to agree to the proposal, provided the French Vice-Consul addressed his representations to the British Political Agent. On this point the Government of India stated that they would only recognize the French Vice-Consul at Bushire as Vice-Consul for Manama (Bahrein) on the clear understanding (1) that his exequatur be obtained from His Majesty's Government; (2) that his dealings be with the British Political Officer alone; (3) that he should acquire no extraterritorial jurisdiction. The Government of India further stated that they preferred postponement of the question until our position as regards the pearling banks had been established, especially as it had been raised in connection with the proposed pearling enterprise of the French, to which the Arabs objected. The

India Office, August 31, 1904.
India Office, September 8, 1904.

Inclosure in India Office, October 15, 1904.

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf stated that, subject to the conditions suggested by the India Office, the appointment would perhaps be a useful recognition of our quasi British Protectorate over Bahrein; and he should for this reason have recommended acceptance, if the motive had not been the admitted desire of French merchants to gain access to the pearl fisheries.

The Government of India were of opinion that the best solution was to drop the question, and this seems to have been done.

Bahrein Customs.

The administration of the Customs at Bahrein, which is a minor centre of the arms traffic, has for a considerable time engaged the anxious attention of the Government of India.

They are at present leased to and farmed by British-Indian Banias.

1898. So far back as 1898, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf broached the subject with the Chief, who gave Colonel Meade to understand that he would not renew the farmer's lease without first communicating with him. Despite this understanding, the lease was subsequently extended for a period of two years. Shortly afterwards the Sheikh again promised not to enter into any fresh contract without first informing the Resident. But in January 1900 Colonel Meade reported that the Sheikh had again departed from his engagements, and had prolonged the lease for a further term of two years, without previous intimation. A remonstrance was made, and the Chief expressed regret; but, nevertheless, when in 1901, at the instance of Sir N. O'Conor, it was again suggested that he should employ a British subject to supervise the Customs, he once more declined to accede to the wishes of His Majesty's Government.

Government of India's despatch of April 21, 1904.

India Office, June 8, 1904.

1900.

1901.

1903. On the occasion of his tour in the Persian Gulf in 1903, the Viceroy spoke seriously about the matter to the Chief, and pointed out to him the necessity of a change in the existing arrangements. The Sheikh asked for time for reflection; but this only resulted in his resserting his unwillingness to redress the abuses which had called forth complaints.

1904. The conclusions formulated on the subject by the Government of India are indicated in their despatch of the 21st April, 1904:—

"The need for reform is clearly indicated by the figures given in Colonel Kemball's letter. The Chief's present income from his Customs is 1,16,200 rupees, while the revenue which may be expected under an efficient system is estimated at 3,50,000 rupees. The practicability of the change is proved by the example of Muscat, where, in partial compliance with our wishes, the Sultan has taken the Customs administration under direct management, and has already reaped considerable benefit from the arrangement. The matter is obviously one to which we cannot remain indifferent. Committed, as we are, to the support of Sheikh Hamed, it is incumbent on us to take measures to insure that, on his accession, he may find his house in order, and may not be burdened with a heavy legacy of debt accumulated by the improvidence of his predecessor. For this reason we consider that the question is not one which can be allowed to drop, even if it were possible to overlook the Sheikh's repeated breaches of faith and his persistently contumacious attitude with regard to it. In fact, the reform of the Customs administration of Bahrein has become a test case of the nature and degree of the influence which the British Government may reasonably claim to exercise over the Ruler of those islands."

1906. In August 1906 a further attempt was made by the Resident to induce the Sheikh to intrust the collection of the customs to the Government of India for a specific sum, in place of farming them out to the Bania British Indian contractors. He declined to adopt this course, and the matter was temporarily allowed to drop. It is suggested that the real ground of the refusal is to be found in the fact that Bahrein is the centre of a large smuggling trade.

Judicial Powers exercised by the Political Agent at Bahrein.

1907. The Government of India raised this subject in their despatch of the 14th November, 1907, which is now under consideration, and of which the following is an extract:—

"The Agent has at present the powers of a Magistrate of the 1st class, as described in 'The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898,' in respect of offences committed by native Indian subjects of His Majesty in the Island of Bahrein and on the southern

shores of the Persian Gulf. He also extends his good offices* to European foreigners in any disputes between them and the Chief of Bahrein or his subjects.

"Next, he holds a Court, composed of himself and a representative of the Chief, for the trial of cases in which the accused is a Bahrein subject or a foreigner who prefers not to invoke British good offices, and the other party is a British or foreign subject who does so.

"Finally, he controls a local Court of Arbitration for the adjustment of civil disputes between British subjects and protégés on the one hand, and Bahrein subjects or persons of any other nationality, on the other hand. This Court has been in existence for over fifty years.

"He also, on occasions, issues bills of health, signs marine protests, and legalizes signatures on behalf of British Indian subjects. Strictly speaking, however, he has no legal authority for undertaking these latter duties.

"With a view to define and regularize the powers exercised over British subjects by the Agent, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf has put forward the suggestion that he should be appointed to be a Justice of the Peace and endowed with the powers of a District Judge in direct subordination to the High Court of Bombay. We concur in this recommendation, but, with reference to clause 2 of 'The Indian Foreign Jurisdiction Order in Council, 1902,' we understand that it would first be necessary for Bahrein to be declared by His Majesty in Council to be a territory in which jurisdiction is exercised by, or on behalf of, His Majesty through the Governor-General in Council. We would accordingly request that, if His Majesty's Government see no objection, the necessary Order in Council may be passed providing for the exercise of jurisdiction in Bahrein.

"But further, in view of the increase of foreign shipping and foreign interest generally in the Gulf, and of the establishment of foreign firms and missions in Bahrein, which has already caused practical difficulties, it seems desirable that, if possible, in maintenance of the *status quo* in the Gulf, provision should be made in the Order in Council for the exercise by the Political Agent of jurisdiction over foreigners in Bahrein, before foreign interests have so largely developed as to render the assumption of the legal duties of a Protecting Power a matter of greater intricacy and difficulty involving perhaps, as in the case of Zanzibar, diplomatic representations to foreign Powers. Bahrein has been under sole British domination since 1820, and on several occasions we have had to interfere by armed force, either to prevent the Chief of Bahrein from attacking his neighbours, or them from attacking him, or to settle matters relating to the Chiefship. In 1880, by a Treaty published for public information, the Sheikh bound himself to abstain from making Treaties of any sort with any State or Government other than the British, and to refuse to permit other Powers to establish Diplomatic or Consular Agencies or coaling depôts without the consent of the British Government. This Treaty in itself constituted a sort of protectorate, which has perhaps been ripened into maturity by the open and regular exercise of protectorate powers, more especially in the recent cases of attacks on Persian and German subjects in Bahrein. . . . .

"If His Majesty's Government consider it feasible in the circumstances to assume jurisdiction over foreigners in Bahrein, we would recommend that this should be done, and also that the Order in Council should, if possible, be so framed as to enable the Political Agent to perform the functions of a notary public."

Summary.

The political position at Bahrein may be summarized as follows:—

His Majesty's Government have repudiated the Persian claim to sovereignty nine times—in 1822, 1825, 1844, 1848, 1861, 1862, 1869, 1906, and 1907; and the Turkish claim nineteen times—in 1839, 1851, 1870, 1874 (twice), 1875, 1876, 1879, 1888, 1892 (twice), 1893 (three times), 1895 (twice), 1896, and 1905 (twice); while in 1871 the Grand Vizier of Turkey gave a formal assurance "that the Porte entertained no intention whatever of obtaining the supremacy over Bahrein."

On the other hand, His Majesty's Government have themselves had direct relations with Bahrein since 1805; these relations have become increasingly intimate in

* *Vide* Secret despatch from Secretary of State, dated June 21, 1901.

character, and have found concrete expression in a series of Treaties concluded in 1820, 1847, 1856, 1861, 1868, 1880, and 1892, and having as their objects the suppression of piracy and the slave trade, the regularity of the succession to the throne, the protection of the island against foreign control or aggression, and the assertion of British predominance. His Majesty's Government have repeatedly, and with increasing authority, intervened in the internal affairs of the island, notably in 1845, in 1859 when the rival Sheikh was incarcerated in an Indian fortress, in 1861, in 1869 when a naval demonstration took place, in 1898 to recognize the ruling Sheikh's son as successor-designate to the Chiefship, and again in 1904–5 forcibly to effect the punishment of offenders who had assailed German and Persian subjects, and to remove certain abuses affecting public security and the welfare of foreigners. Moreover, in virtue of the Treaty of 1861, the British Agent has exercised important judicial powers in the island for over fifty years; for nearly a century the safety of the pearl industry, of which Bahrein is the centre, has been assured by British ships; and British Consular protection has been regularly afforded to Bahreinese in Turkey and in Persia.

It would now seem to be matter for serious consideration whether the time has not arrived to regularize the position at Bahrein by a more definite assertion of British predominance. The Government of India, in their despatch already quoted (see p. 18), have set forth the arguments in favour of the exercise of jurisdiction over foreigners, and the advantages of adopting such a course before foreign interests have so largely developed as to render the assumption of the legal duties of a Protecting Power a matter of greater intricacy and difficulty.

The question arises whether it would not be more practicable and be less likely to evoke hostile comment if the assumption of these duties (which would probably necessitate a notification to foreign Powers) were accompanied by various administrative reforms, which, carried out under British control, would conduce to the general prosperity of commerce, check the traffic in arms which now exists, and gradually place the revenue of the Sheikh upon a more stable footing.

That such reforms are desirable has been recognized by the Government of India in earlier despatches; unfortunately, though steps in the right direction have been taken, no substantial improvement has been effected since the Native Agent was succeeded by a British Agent in 1900. Writing in this year, Mr. Zwemer, an American missionary resident at Bahrein, asserted that:—

"Oppression, blackmail, and bribery are universal, and except in commerce and the Slave Trade, English protection has brought about no reforms in the island. To be 'protected' means here strict neutrality as to the internal affairs, and absolute dictation as to affairs with other Governments."

It is much to be regretted that the negotiations for the control of the customs proved abortive, and, in view of the increasing importance of Bahrein, it is worth while considering whether the Sheikh should not be offered a large subsidy in return for the customs, which, under British control, would, no doubt, give a far larger yield. It is eminently desirable in the interests of the island that the finances should be reformed, in order that certain public works, and more especially harbour accommodation and the construction of a pier, may be undertaken. The development of trade on any considerable scale is largely dependent upon the execution of such works. Moreover, it is incumbent upon the Government of India to take timely steps to provide against a deficit on the demise of the present Sheikh, to whose successor, Sheikh Hamed, they are committed.

The Customs question has also separate importance in connection with the Arms Traffic.

It should be borne in mind that at one period Bahrein was renowned for its fertility, and that it is capable under wise government of becoming so again. It possesses an excellent water supply, and the climate is far more suited to Europeans than that of Kishm or Muscat. Situated about half way between Cape Musandim and the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, in geographical position it possesses advantages as a trade centre which are superior to those of any other place in the Gulf under present conditions. Some idea of the commerce of the island may be derived from the fact that the export of pearls from there was 475,000*l.* in 1901, and the total trade of Bahrein increased 30 per cent. between 1905 and 1906, when it reached 1,454,000*l.* exclusive of pearls. Of the steam tonnage entered in the port in 1906, British vessels represented 100,983 tons; American, 3,943; and German, 6,205.

If a British "Commissioner" with commercial aptitudes could be appointed to control the customs and gradually to facilitate the establishment of a trade emporium and of an open market, such action would go far to promote the commercial interests of this country. Moreover, such a state of affairs could not fail to attract in still greater numbers than at present the merchants of Lingah and other places, where the appearance of the Belgian Customs officials has given rise to much dissatisfaction.

It appears very desirable to anticipate German action by opening a bank at Bahrein, and some Bombay house might be approached in this connection.

Bahrein being the centre of the pearl industry, and in close proximity to the coast of El Katif, which is infested with pirates, the installation of wireless telegraphic communication between the island and His Majesty's ships would prove of value, while the commercial advantages of establishing telegraphic intercourse with the outside world are apparent.

Writing in 1904 Sir N. O'Conor, who had been consulted in regard to the steps which were in contemplation for improving the status and position of the British Agent, replied that he had felt strongly for some years past that we were losing the opportunity of asserting our supremacy at Bahrein, that he sincerely welcomed the proposals of the Government of India, and that he undertook that the Turkish Government should raise no serious difficulties. Sir N. O'Conor, No. 511, June 28, 1904.

Sir Lewis Pelly, writing in 1863, strongly advocated the establishment of a free port under British control in the Persian Gulf. He wrote as follows:—

"The case of Hormuz is a precedent for a like station; the interferences, incertitude, and want of accurate knowledge of the market all round the Gulf point to the alleviation of these evils by the creation of a general entrepôt at a convenient point, where all vessels would, if they pleased to call, find cargo ready; whereto all boats finding a favourable chance for exports from their several jurisdictions could run a cargo in a few days, and where to all trade might converge, as circumstances admitted, from ports subjected to sudden, but not permanent, arbitrary interference.

"My respectful suggestion to Government is, that the formation of a port so concentrating all our interests would do more to create and to develop the trade of the Gulf and Bussorah line, and would do more to keep the Government accurately informed as to their relations and the condition of commerce in the Gulf, and would further do more to keep the maritime Arabs quiet, and to afford an issue for whatever capabilities of trade may be possessed by Arabia, than could all the reports, all the figured statements, and all the amicable interviews of all the Residents and all the native authorities, that ever had, or may have, place round these waters.

"But the port must be really free, and all tribes and people must know and feel it to be free; and that, once there, their goods and persons are secure and unmolested. Let the authorities of the port limit their functions to keeping the peace, removing obstacles, enforcing valid contracts, and punishing mercantile crime, for the rest, leave all to private enterprise, and leave trade free as the tide to flow in and out. I think that thus only can we practically test the commercial capabilities of the Gulf."

(d.) *El Katr, or Guttur.*

The El Katr peninsula lies south of Ujair, in the district of El Katif. Ujair is the most southerly point to which, with the important exception of Koweit, His Majesty's Government have recognized continuous Turkish influence. Sir C. Ford, No. 158, April 25, 1866.

On the other hand, it is north of El Odeid, to which, in 1878, the Sheikh of Abu Dthabi was allowed to assert his rights of possession, and which now forms the western limit of the territories of the Trucial Chiefs. Aitchison's Treaties, vol. 10

The greater part of the country between El Katif and El Odeid is sparsely inhabited by Bedouin tribes who find pasturage there for their flocks. On the coast are fishing villages, such as Ujair, Zobara, Khor Hassan, El Bidaa and Wakra, the most considerable being El Bidaa.

The question of sovereignty over El Katr has never been definitely decided, and to some extent this region has been regarded as debateable land, between Oman on the one side, and the Wahabee power on the other. At one time the Chief of Abu Dthabi is said to have exercised authority on the actual peninsula. Later the Uttobees, having settled there and at Bahrein, became paramount. These in turn had to pay religious tithe to the Wahabee Amir, who established a Governor of his own at India Office, September 17, 1879.

India Office Memorandum, June 30, 1888

El Bidáa; and threatened to occupy the Bahrein Islands in 1851. This was prevented by the appearance on the scene of British vessels of war, and an arrangement was come to by which the town of El Bidáa was restored to the Bahrein Chief.

There was considerable correspondence in 1872 about a Turkish expedition to Nejd. As a result the Turks remained established in the El Hasa district, and at El Katif on the coast, while a military post was created at El Bidáa, and has been maintained there ever since.

A question was raised at this time as to certain rights claimed by the Sheikh of Bahrein over the mainland coast, and in regard to the *status* of El Odeid.

The British Resident, Colonel Pelly, was of opinion that, while Bahrein should be acknowledged to possess certain rights in regard to pasturage, &c., those rights should not be held as empowering the Sheikh to put to sea for the purpose of coercing any port in El Katr. He regarded El Odeid as properly belonging to Abu Dhabi.

In a Memorandum by the Rev. Mr. Badger on Turkish claims to Oman, he wrote that the native annals of the province incontestably prove that it became independent of the Bagdad Khalifate in the 10th century, and had never since been subject to foreign rule except to the Persians for a short time. He went on to say that the same was true of the Arab Chiefdoms in the Persian Gulf, and that their independence was virtually admitted by Turkey in 1847.

On the 7th May, 1883, Lord Granville wrote to Musurus Pasha that "the claim of the Porte to rights of sovereignty over the El Katr coast has never been admitted by Her Majesty's Government."

In 1895 Her Majesty's Government forcibly dispersed, in the interests of the Bahrein Sheikh, a settlement of malcontents who had established themselves at Zobara, on the El Katr coast, under the Turkish flag (see p. 16). The Turks protested, but Her Majesty's Government stated in reply that they did not recognize Turkish jurisdiction on the El Katr coast (*note verbale* of the 12th August 1895).

The present position is, therefore, that we have refused to recognize Turkish authority in El Katr, although we have acquiesced in the continued presence of a Turkish post since 1872 at El Bidáa. We did, however, object to an attempt by the Turkish Government to appoint a Mudirat Wakra, a point south of El Bidáa; and after considerable pressure they cancelled the appointment.

Mr. Townley, No. 863, November 8, 1904.

The Government of India were not completely satisfied with this result, and desired to round off their relations with the various Arab Chiefs by making an agreement with the leading Sheikh of El Katr.

A former Agreement was concluded in 1868 with the then Sheikh, by which he bound himself to take no hostile action by sea, and to refer all disputes to the British Resident. On the death of this Sheikh, his successor, Sheikh Jasim, applied for a renewal of the Agreement, but this was refused (in 1882) on the ground of the nature of his relations with the Turks.

India Office Memorandum, January 30, 1905.

In 1904 the Government of India expressed forcibly their view that a Treaty should be negotiated with Sheikh Ahmed, in anticipation of the death of Sheikh Jasim, who had then reached an advanced age. An opportunity of making such a Treaty had arisen through the disturbance of the *status quo* by the Turkish Government, who had appointed officials to Wakra and other places on the coast. The Government of India at first proposed that a Treaty should be entered into with Sheikh Ahmed on the lines of the existing Treaties with Bahrein and the Trucial Chiefs, by which he would be debarred from parting with territory to others than the British Government. Although in deference to British remonstrances the Turkish Government had at length withdrawn their interloping officials, the Government of India remained of opinion that the position of Great Britain should be consolidated by the immediate conclusion with Sheikh Ahmed of a Treaty similar to the former one (of 1868), if the stricter form of Treaty with Bahrein and the Trucial Chiefs were held to be inadmissible.

The principal reasons adduced in favour of this course were—

1. The El Katr Coast, lying as it does between Bahrein and the Pirate Coast, constitutes a break in the continuity of British maritime influence.

2. The absence of a Treaty does not facilitate, and may considerably increase, the work of His Majesty's ships in suppressing piracy and maintaining the peace of the Gulf. In this connection it is observed that one objection to the extension of Turkish authority in those regions is the inability of the Turks to establish a strong Administration, which is eminently desirable in a district which, owing to its proximity to

Bahrein—the centre of the pearl fisheries—affords exceptional inducements to pirates and marauders.

These considerations did not, however, overcome the disinclinations of His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, who was keenly alive to the difficulties which such a course might provoke with the Ottoman Government. His Excellency laid stress upon the multiplicity of pending questions with Turkey, such as the energetic action being taken to secure the removal of the Turkish post from Bubiyan Island, and he was distinctly of opinion that, under existing circumstances, the conclusion of a Treaty as proposed would be inopportune.

Sir N. O'Conor, No. 516, June 28, 1904.

It was decided that the question should be submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defence, who do not appear to have recorded any definite opinion.

In a Minute dated the 5th February, 1905, Lord Lansdowne wrote as follows:—

"I feel strongly that the time has come when all these questions should be considered, not as we have been in the habit of considering them—piecemeal and as they arise—but as parts of a Persian Gulf policy, the principles of which should be carefully laid down for our guidance."

(c.) *The Wahabees.*

To appreciate the present political conditions and recent history of Arabia it is necessary to go back to the year 1742, which marks the rise of the remarkable Wahabee movement, which was at the bottom of all the political changes that the peninsula has seen since that time.

Colonel Pelly alluded to the subject in the following terms:—

"It is this Nejd power, occupying the wide centre of Adnan Arabia, and composed of nomadic or only partially stationary Arab tribes, some now in revolt and some now used for quelling revolt, that threatens or dominates all round the shore-line from the back of the Euphrates and Shat-el-Arab, down along the Pirate Coast, and thence round Cape Musandim, along Muscat, Oman, to Ras-el-Had, on the Aden line.

"It was a Kazee or Mullah of Bussorah, named Wahab, who (or whose son), permeating these tribes with the metamorphic agency of a religious idea, fused them into an aggressive mass, which, cropping out along the shore-lines of Muscat and the western coast of the Persian Gulf, compelled all these subdued tribes into plunder and piracy. Hence the once notorious appearance of the maritime Arabs as pirates; hence our expeditions to the west coast of the Gulf; and hence the Ras-el-Kheimahs and Benibu-Alis blending with our colours. An Arab Sheikh endeavoured to explain to me the nature of this unenduring Wahabee power by likening it to the agency of Lord Clive in conquering India with a sepoy army. The leading tenets* of Wahab's faith seem to have been those common to prophets, to proclaim himself and the unity of the Creator and kill or plunder his immortal creatures."

British Relations with the Wahabees.

[Communicated by the India Office.]

In April 1866 the then Wahabee Amir, Imam Abdullah-bin-Feysul, entered into a voluntary engagement with the British Government (in the form of a declaration, which was not signed on our side), by which he bound himself— Aitchison, vol. x, p. 116.

1. Not to oppose or injure British subjects residing in territories under his authority.

2. Not to "injure or attack the territories of the Arab tribes in alliance with the British Government, specially on the Kingdom of Muscat, further than in receiving the *zukat* that has been customary of old."

* What most offended the rigid monotheism of Wahab's philosophy was the almost universal visitation of shrines, invocation of saints, and honour paid to the tomb of Mahommed. The use of the rosary, of jewels, wine, and tobacco were all abominations to be eschewed. On the other hand, the prophet married twenty wives, and died at the age of 95 after begetting eighteen children.

With the decline of the Wahabee power and the withdrawal of their influence from politics on the coast, the above engagement ceased to be of practical value, and all relations between the Wahabees and ourselves came to an end. It is worth recording that in October 1901, at a time of serious intertribal disturbances in the interior of Arabia, we came to an understanding with the Turkish Government that we would do what we could to discourage the Sheikh of Koweit from aggressive action, on the understanding that the Turks would endeavour to restrain the Amir of Nejd.

Lord Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor, October 1, 1901.

The successes of the present Wahabee Amir, Abdul Aziz-bin-Saoud, over his rival the Amir of Nejd (Abdul Aziz-bin-Rashid) again brought the Wahabee question to the front. In February 1904, when the Government of India were considering a proposal to send an Agent to Riadh, the Wahabee capital, for the purpose of collecting information on Central Arabian affairs, Mr. Brodrick telegraphed to the Viceroy as follows:—

Mr. Brodrick's telegram of February 8, 1904.

"No steps should be taken to enter into closer relations with Nejd, or send Agents there, without previous sanction of His Majesty's Government."

Sir N. O'Conor, who was consulted, while recognizing the advantages of obtaining fuller information as to affairs in the interior of Arabia, held that the moment was not opportune for the action suggested; and to this opinion the Government of India, after receiving the views of Colonel Kemball, the Resident in the Persian Gulf, subscribed in a despatch dated the 24th March, 1904. They considered, however, that, in view of recent developments of the situation, there was reason to think that "it may shortly be incumbent on us to take a more lively interest in the affairs of Central Arabia," and they added that: "later, ... when the political situation in Nejd has developed, and above all if the present representative of the Wahabee family . . . . succeeds in establishing and extending his ascendancy, which from the latest accounts received seems to be not improbable, we think that it may be desirable again to enter into relations with our old ally."

Sir N. O'Conor to Lord Lansdowne, February 26, 1904.

Government of India's letter, March 24, 1904.

The successes of Bin Saoud in April 1904 led the Turkish Government to send troops and guns to the assistance of Bin Rashid. Bin Saoud thereupon wrote to the Resident in the Persian Gulf on the 2nd May, 1904, protesting against the Turkish invasion and soliciting the protection of Great Britain for himself and his country. At the same time the Resident received from Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit a letter addressed to the latter by Bin Saoud, in which he hinted that, if he failed to obtain British protection, he might have to fall back on the Russian offer of assistance made to him in 1903. The Government of India, in reporting this on the 20th May, suggested that it might become necessary to revive the proposal to post a British Resident at Koweit, in order to watch events, should the Turks persist in armed intervention.

Sir N. O'Conor to Foreign Office, April 26 and May 4, 1904.

Viceroy's telegram, May 20, 1904.

Lord Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor, May 10, 1904.

Lord Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor, May 21, 1904.

Sir N. O'Conor to Foreign Office, May 23, 1904.

Viceroy's telegram, May 29, 1904.

Sir N. O'Conor had already been instructed, on the 10th May, 1904, to point out to the Porte that His Majesty's Government, in the hope of assisting to preserve the peace, had "employed special efforts to dissuade the Sheikh of Koweit from taking part, even indirectly, in the hostilities that have broken out," and to protest against any action being taken by the Turkish Government "which might add still further to the disturbed condition of this part of Arabia." On receipt of the Viceroy's telegram of the 20th May, 1904, Sir N. O'Conor was further instructed by telegraph to communicate at once with the Porte, and to repeat in urgent terms the representations he had already been instructed to make.

Sir N. O'Conor replied on the 23rd May that it was difficult to see on what grounds the Porte could be pressed to refrain from assisting the Amir of Nejd, who was the party attacked. He considered that we should confine ourselves for the present to maintaining intact the territory of Koweit and awaiting developments, but that, if the Turks persisted in rendering assistance to Bin Rashid, it might be expedient to reconsider the question of appointing a British Resident at Koweit.

The substance of Sir N. O'Conor's views was telegraphed to India on the 24th May. In reply, the Government of India, in a telegram dated the 29th May, suggested that Sir N. O'Conor should be instructed to inform the Porte that we had no desire to assist Bin Saoud directly or indirectly, but that if, as a result of Turkish support, Bin Rashid became unduly powerful, our interests in Eastern Arabia might be injuriously affected. They held that British prestige at Koweit would be impaired if, by preventing Mubarak from assisting his friend and ally Bin Saoud, and by stopping the importation of arms, we allowed Turkish influence to determine the supremacy of the Turkish nominee in Central Arabia. Their conclusions were that

an Agent should be sent to Koweit, and that the arms trade there should not be interfered with.

The proposal to send an officer as Political Agent to Koweit was approved by His Majesty's Government, and the Government of India were informed accordingly on the 24th June, 1904. It was decided at the same time to defer for the present any fresh measures for the prevention of the importation of arms at Koweit. Captain Knox, the officer appointed, proceeded to Koweit in August 1904.

Mr. Brodrick's telegrams, June 24, 1904.

Towards the end of August 1904 the Turks, who had hitherto supported Bin Rashid, made overtures to Bin Saoud, and the latter applied to Sheikh Mubarak for advice as to how the Turkish advances should be met. Mubarak approached the Political Agent at Koweit on the subject in October 1904, but Captain Knox informed him that he had no instructions to give advice, and that Bin Saoud should consult his own interests in the matter. On the 30th December, 1904, Mr. Brodrick telegraphed to the Government of India that "His Majesty's Government desire that it should be clearly understood that their interest and influence are to be confined strictly to coast-line of Eastern Arabia, and that nothing should be said or done to connect them even indirectly with warfare now in progress in interior. They agree that Knox should give no opinion on advice to be given by Mubarak to Bin Saoud, but should repeat to former warnings already given against entanglements in interior." It may be added that in February 1905 a meeting took place at Koweit between Sheikh Mubarak, the Turkish Vali of Bussorah, and Bin Saoud's father, and Bin Saoud seems subsequently to have come to terms, for the time being, with the Turkish Government.

Captain Knox to Captain Trevor, October 17, 1904.

Mr. Brodrick's telegram, December 30, 1904.

Mr. Townley to Foreign Office, February 12 and 17, 1905.

Towards the end of 1905 Bin Saoud, whose successes in Nejd had continued unabated, paid a visit to El Katr and addressed letters to the Sheikhs of the Pirate Coast, announcing his intention of visiting their territories in the following spring. The most important of the Trucial Chiefs, the Sheikh of Abu Dthabi, conferred personally with the Sultan of Muscat on the situation, both Rulers regarding the prospect of Bin Saoud's visit with considerable apprehension.

Captain Trevor to Government of India, October 29, 1905.

The Government of India addressed the Secretary of State on the subject in a despatch dated the 11th January, 1906, in which they pointed out "how very serious to our prestige and influence the consequences might be if Bin Saoud should attack the Pirate Coast Chiefs or the Sultan of Muscat, or succeed in extending his influence over them, and how important it is that we should prevent, as far as lies in our power, such a contingency, especially now that the Wahabee Amir has recognized the suzerainty of the Sultan." They accordingly proposed that inquiry should be made, either through Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit or through the Sultan of Muscat, as to Bin Saoud's intentions, with a view to ascertaining "whether he is prepared to stand by the engagement of his predecessors not to oppose or injure British subjects residing in his territories, and not to interfere with the Arab tribes in alliance with the British Government"; and that, failing a satisfactory assurance on his part, he should be warned that interference in those localities would be regarded as an unfriendly act, and that "suitable measures would be taken to frustrate it." "These measures," the despatch concluded, "might amount, in our opinion, to a more stringent embargo on the import of arms at Koweit and elsewhere on the Arabian coast of the Gulf, or even, in the case of an attack being imminent, to actual armed assistance from British ships to the Sheikhs threatened, as might be necessary."

Government of India's letter, January 11, 1906.

In communicating this despatch to the Foreign Office, some doubt was expressed as to the practicability of the Government of India's suggestions, and it was suggested that no steps should be taken, "in the absence of any urgent necessity caused by Wahabee action," until Sir N. O'Conor had been consulted on the proposal to approach Bin Saoud otherwise than through the medium of the Turks.

India Office to Foreign Office, February 22, 1906.

Meanwhile, on the 19th January, 1906, Captain Knox, the Political Agent at Koweit, had talked the matter over informally with Mubarak, and after inquiring as to the truth of the reports regarding Bin Saoud's intentions, gave the Sheikh a hint that any interference by the Wahabee Amir in the affairs of States in Treaty relation with us would not be likely to find favour with the British Government. Mubarak replied that he regarded Bin Saoud's plans as designed merely to extort money from the Sheikhs on the coast, and that he had himself written to Bin Saoud strongly advising him against persisting in any such attempt. Major Cox, in reporting this conversation to the Government of India, suggested that he should be authorized to

Major Cox to Government of India, February 4, 1906.

inform all the Trucial Chiefs that the Government of India "would not regard with complacency the intrigues of any of them with Bin Saoud."

The Government of India telegraphed on the 15th March, 1906, supporting Major Cox's suggestion, which was approved, with the concurrence of the Foreign Office, by Mr. Morley's telegram dated the 9th April.

Sir N. O'Conor, March 20, 1906.

As regards the warning to Bin Saoud contemplated by the Government of India, the Foreign Office adopted the views of Sir N. O'Conor, who had been consulted and had recommended in a despatch dated the 20th March, 1906, that any such warning should be conveyed direct to Bin Saoud, and not through the agency of the Sheikh of Koweit or the Sultan of Muscat. Sir N. O'Conor further suggested that Bin Saoud, in the event of his visiting the coast, should be met by a British vessel of war at one of the places which he proposed to visit, and told that no tampering with the engagements and Conventions of the Trucial Chiefs would be permitted.

Mr. Morley's despatch, April 13, 1906.

In conveying the decision of His Majesty's Government to the Government of India, the Secretary of State wrote as follows in a despatch dated the 13th April, 1906:—

"His Majesty's Government accept the view that a warning to the Amir would be necessary if he were to carry out his reported intention. They consider, however, that it would be better that such warning should be conveyed to him only in the event of his appearing upon the coast, and that it should then be conveyed to him directly as proposed by Sir N. O'Conor."

Major Cox to Government of India, April 5, 1906.

Bin Saoud's reply to Mubarak's letter of advice was communicated to the Political Agent, Koweit, on the 25th February, 1906. Major Cox described it as a "very courteous response." The terms of Bin Saoud's letter, as translated from the vernacular, are obscure, but his apparent object was to disclaim any intention of objectionable action. As a matter of fact, Bin Saoud did not visit the Pirate Coast.

In April 1906 news was received of the defeat and death of Bin Rashid at the hands of his rival, Bin Saoud.

Major Cox to Government of India, September 16, 1906.

On the 16th September, 1906, Major Cox again raised the question of entering into closer relations with the interior of Arabia. He drew attention to overtures that had been made by and on behalf of Bin Saoud with a view to the establishment of a closer connection between himself and the British Government, and recommended that the opportunity should be taken to come to terms with the Wahabee Chief on the following grounds:—

1. That overtures had been made at various times by Bin Saoud himself, and by Sheikh Jasim-bin-Thani of Katr and Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit on Bin Saoud's behalf, with a view to securing for the latter some measure of British protection, and that if we neglected these overtures Bin Saoud and his following might regard us with hostility.

2. That if a friendly understanding were to exist between the British Government and Bin Saoud, both the Sultan of Muscat and the Trucial Chiefs would be fortified by the knowledge that any attempt on the part of the Wahabee to make a descent upon Oman would involve a preliminary rupture between him and the British Government.

3. That if Bin Saoud were our friend he would be able to assist us in suppressing piracies in the northern part of the Gulf.

4. That such a friendly understanding would facilitate Major Cox's dealings with the Trucial Chiefs and would render it possible for our officers to make occasional tours in the Nejd country.

5. That the Arabs of Central Arabia, apparently driven to desperation by Turkish interference, seemed disposed to make common cause to throw off the yoke, and were apparently trying to secure the support of the Sheikh of Koweit and even of the Sheikh of Mohammerah. Realizing, however, that they were not strong enough to stand alone, they saw the necessity of enlisting the support of a Christian Power, and if we did not respond they might approach some other Power.

It may be explained that, in addition to the overtures of Sheikh Mubarak and Sheikh Jasim, the subject had also been broached by an emissary of Bin Saoud himself, one Musaad-bin-Suweilim, who arrived at Bahrein in January 1906 and informed the British Agent there that Bin Saoud now felt himself strong enough

to turn the Turks out of Hassa and Katif, and then wished to enter into Treaty relations with the British Government, allowing us, if we desired, to keep a Political Officer in Hassa or Katif in return for our protecting him from a sea attack by the Turks.

Major Cox's letter of the 16th September, 1906, was sent home for information in the ordinary course, without comment, in October 1906. On the 9th November Mr. Morley informed the Government of India by telegram that "His Majesty's Government maintain view that their interest and influence should be confined to coast." "No steps," the telegram added, "should be taken to enter into relations with Nejd or to send Agents into interior without my previous sanction."

Mr. Morley's telegram, November 9, 1906.

Bin Saoud lost little time in renewing his application. In October 1906 he sent a further message through Sheikh Jasim, in which his proposals were set forth in greater detail. This message, which was delivered by Sheikh Jasim to the interpreter of the British Political Agent, Bahrein, was thus reported by Captain Prideaux on the 17th November, 1906:—

Captain Prideaux to Major Cox, November 17, 1906.

"The resources of Nejd are stated to have been strained to the utmost by the recent internecine wars, and Bin Saoud considers that the oases of Hassa and Katif were always the most profitable possessions of his Wahabee ancestors. He is anxious, therefore, to recover the two districts, and he proposes that a secret understanding should be arranged between the British Government and himself, under which he should be granted British protection from Turkish assaults at sea, in the event of his ever succeeding in driving the Turks, unaided, out of his ancestral dominions. In return for this protection the Amir is willing to bind himself to certain agreements (probably similar to those of the Trucial Chiefs), and to accept a Political Officer to reside at his Court. The details of this Secret Treaty he wishes to be settled or discussed at an interview which he is ready to give me, either in person or with his brother representing him, at some convenient rendezvous in the desert. Bin Saoud is determined to make an effort to obtain possession of Hassa and Katif, for without the additional revenue which he can derive from these tracts he admits that he is unable to control the tribes who menace the highways of commerce and pilgrimage. He proposes, therefore, in the first place, to apply to the Sultan for the *Mutasarrif-lik* (Governorship) of the districts, and to throw off the Turkish yoke as soon as he considers the moment favourable after establishing himself. If his application is refused, he will invade the districts as soon as he is ready, and, having captured them, he will appeal openly to the British Government for protection. If he fails, he will never betray the secret understanding between himself and the Government. Possibly he will not make his attempt even for four or five years more."

Major Cox to Government of India, November 24, 1906.

In forwarding Captain Prideaux's Report to the Government of India, Major Cox, in a letter dated the 24th November, 1906, urged the necessity of an "authoritative" reply being returned to the "references made through the local officers by Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit and Sheikh Jasim of Katr on behalf of Bin Saoud—references which have in no way been courted, but which I cannot leave unanswered without incurring among the Chiefs concerned a reputation for personal negligence or discourtesy, which would be prejudicial to my work in other ways."

These papers were sent home for information in the ordinary course by the Government of India without comment in January 1907. In a telegram dated the 9th February, 1907, the Government of India were asked for an expression of their views as to the answer to be returned to Sheikh Jasim. They replied as follows on the 15th February:—

Viceroy's telegram, February 15, 1907.

"We are sending despatch reviewing situation in Eastern Arabia, and suggesting that answer be conveyed to Bin Saoud to the effect that British Government, while anxious to maintain friendly relations with him so long as he comports himself in a manner consonant with British interests and our engagements with Arab Sheikhs on coast, see no necessity at present for making him any formal promises of the protection which might even have effect of stimulating Turkish opposition to consolidation of his authority. Answer might be conveyed orally through Sheikh Jasim or such other agency as our Resident in the Persian Gulf may recommend."

Government of India, February 21, 1907.

The promised despatch was sent on the 21st February, 1907. In it the Government of India reviewed the position of His Majesty's Government in regard to Nejd affairs since 1904. They expressed the view that matters were rapidly approaching a crisis, which would compel us to make up our minds as to our policy towards Central Arabia. They considered the prospects of Turkey re-establishing her

authority in Eastern Arabia to be remote, and even contemplated the prospect of the Turks disappearing altogether from the whole of Arabia south of Zobeir. At the same time they held that the establishment of the Wahabee power would be a menace to our position at Koweit as well as on the Pirate Coast. In regard to the question immediately at issue, they recommended that a reply should be returned to Bin Saoud's overtures in the terms set forth in their telegram of the 15th February.

Sir N. O'Conor, April 1, 1907.

Sir N. O'Conor, who was consulted, took the view that it would be most unwise for His Majesty's Government to entangle themselves with Bin Saoud or in any other way to interfere in the internal affairs of Arabia.

Mr. Morley to Government of India, May 3, 1907.

The reply of His Majesty's Government to the Government of India's representations was conveyed in Mr. Morley's despatch of the 3rd May, 1907, in the following terms:—

"After carefully considering, in consultation with His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, the views expressed by your Excellency's Government as to the general situation in Central Arabia, His Majesty's Government see no reason to modify the policy laid down in my predecessor's telegram of the 30th December, 1904, and repeated in my telegram of the 9th November, 1906, that British interests and influence in those regions should be strictly confined to the coast; and they agree with Sir N. O'Conor that it would be most unwise for them to entangle themselves with the Wahabee Amir or in any other way to interfere in the internal affairs of Arabia.

"The terms of the reply, which in paragraph 11 of your letter you propose to return to Bin Saoud, appear to His Majesty's Government to be open to objection, as implying an approval of the consolidation of the Wahabee power, and consequently a certain interference in Arabian affairs. No such communication should therefore be made. But if Major Cox finds it impossible to avoid giving some answer to those who have approached him on the Wahabee Amir's behalf, he should inform them, as Bin Saoud's proposals involve considerations which it is impossible for His Majesty's Government to maintain, that no reply is to be expected."

So far as is known, Bin Saoud's advances were not renewed during the year 1907.

(f.) *Turkey and Koweit.*

Turkey.

Ujair, in the district of El Katif, is the most southerly point to which, with the important exception of Koweit, His Majesty's Government have recognized continuous Turkish influence. This influence was confirmed by the expedition to Nejd in 1871, with the result that the Turks have remained established at El Katif and in the El Hasa district ever since.

The administration is disorderly and, owing to the half-hearted co-operation of the local authorities, British naval officers have been repeatedly thwarted in their attempts to capture pirates, with whom this district is a favourite resort.

The Arabian coast north of Katif, all the way to Koweit Bay, is without a single large settlement. Mostly barren and in the hands of the predatory and warlike tribe of Bni Hajar, it is very uninteresting and entirely unproductive.

North of Koweit, Turkish territory extends to the western shore of the Island of El Khizo, and includes Fao, where there is a British telegraph office, on the River Shat-el-Arab.

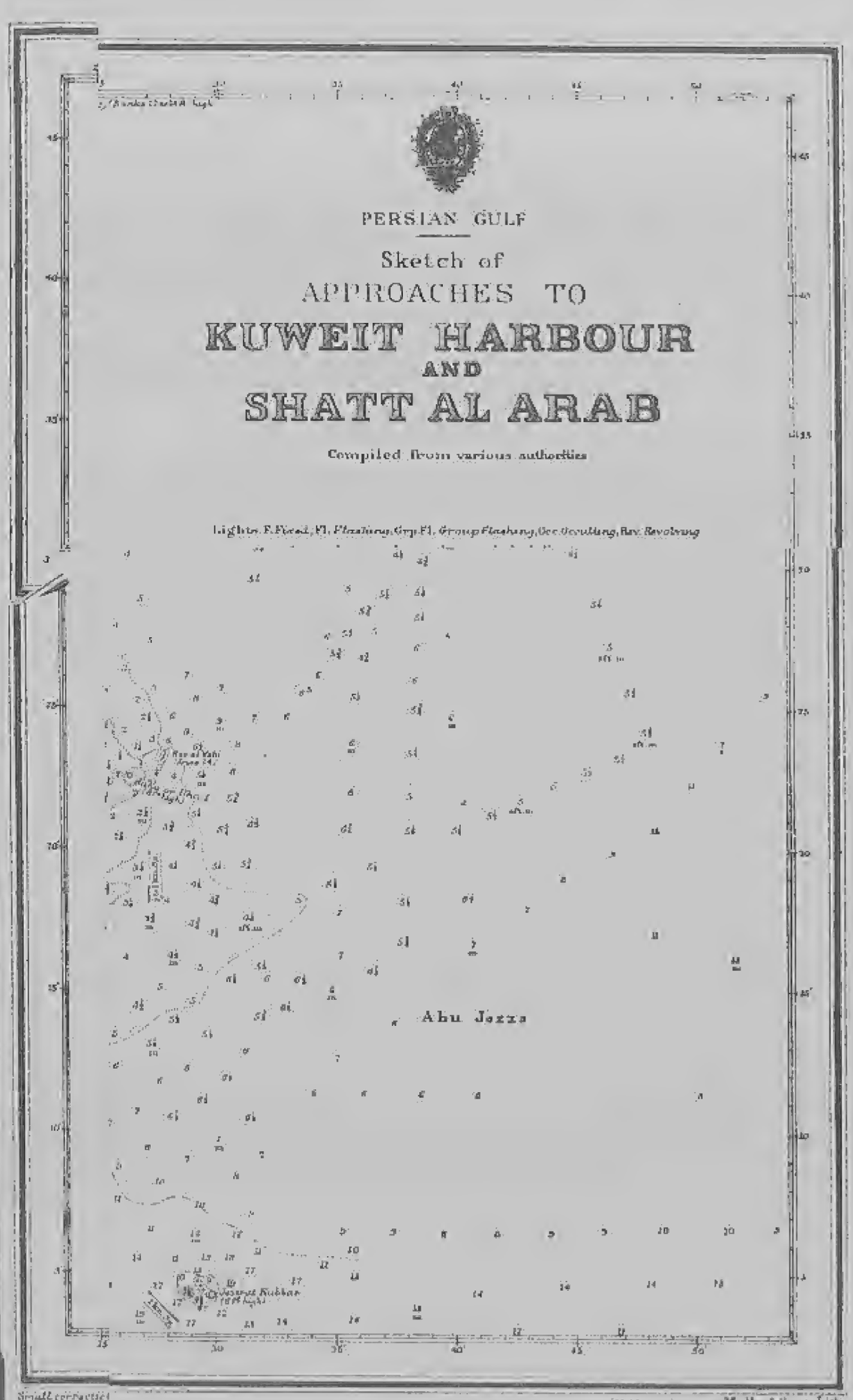
Much correspondence took place between 1887 and 1897 respecting the creation of fortified works at Fao, and Her Majesty's Government energetically opposed these works. A full statement on the subject is contained in an India Office Memorandum dated the 21st June, 1897.

Foreign Office, Library, No. 8799. Confidential.

Captain Smyth, who was sent on a special mission to the Persian Gulf in 1904, reported as follows:—

"Fao is not a fort in any sense of the word; there are no fortifications and no guns."

Piracy on the Shat-el-Arab has formed a continual source of anxiety to the British authorities charged with the security of life and property on the Persian Gulf.



[2381] 4 July 1907.

PERSIAN GULF

Sketch of

APPROACHES TO

KUWEIT HARBOUR

AND

SHATT AL ARAB

Compiled from various authorities

Lights F.Fixed, Fl. Flashing, Occ.Fl. Occulting, Alt.Flashing, Rev.Revolving
General, as noted, Red, R, and W. Shaded, sectors
All Lights are exhibited on Red skew Metal Poles or Spars
Heights in Feet. Depths in Fathoms and Feet at Mean Low Water
Magnetic Variation in 1907, increasing about 5' annually
All Bearings are Magnetic
SOUNDINGS IN FATHOMS

SHATT AL ARAB OR KASR A RIVER

KHOR AL ABDULLAH

KHOR AL ZUBAIR

KHOR AL BUBIYAN

KHOR AL SHUAIBA

KHOR AL SHUWAIKH

KHOR AL KAZIMA

KHOR AL SABIYA

KHOR AL MUTLA

KHOR AL SALMI

KHOR AL MUFTAH

KHOR AL MUTRABA

KHOR AL MUTRABA

KHOR AL MUTRABA

Koweit.

The family of the present Sheikh have ruled at Koweit for above 300 years. Originally the Sheikh's progenitors dwelt in a small fort, called Moomgussur, situated at the head of the Khor Abdulla, near Bunder Zobeir. They were once the pirates of the north of the Persian Gulf, and were expelled from their former stronghold by the Bussorah authorities. They came down the Bubiyan Creek and settled on the southern shore of the "Bay of Grane," where they built a fort or "kote," whence the name Koweit is derived. Colonel Pelly's Report of April 1863.

Limits.

The limits of Koweit have never been accurately, or, indeed, even approximately, defined. The claims of the Sheikh extend on the south as far as Musalamiya Bay, but the British Resident was of opinion that they could not be supported, and that this place was clearly within the sphere of Turkish influence. India Office, May 12, 1902.

On the north they include Safwan, Um Kasr, and Subiya on the mainland, and the islands of Warba and Bubiyan. Much correspondence took place in 1902 in regard to the nature of these claims, owing to a forward move of the Turks, who erected a fort at Um Kasr, and established a military post at Ras-al-Geit on Bubiyan Island.

As regards Safwan, it was considered doubtful whether the Sheikh's claims could be maintained, as they rested upon the shifting allegiance of migratory tribes. India Office, February 5, 1902.

In a report on Um Kasr, Captain Smyth, who made a special survey of the proposed trace of the Bagdad Railway in 1904, observes that he learned on the spot that the old fort of Um Kasr is generally held to have been built by the grandfather of Sheikh Mubarek, and that it was occasionally occupied during the spring months by Arabs from Koweit. Mr. Wratislaw, His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah, stated that while it was highly desirable to secure control over Um Kasr, the Sheikh had only a very shadowy claim to it, and it had been uninhabited for many years. On the other hand, the Turks seemed to have little claim beyond that of actual occupation. Sir N. O'Conor, No. 448, June 15, 1904. Sir N. O'Conor, No. 33, Telegraphic, March 16, 1902.

"His claim to Bubiyan Island," Mr. Wratislaw continued, "is in my opinion good. For some months every year regularly it is used as a fishing ground by Arabs acknowledging his authority, and by no others." Sir N. O'Conor, No. 40, Telegraphic, March 26, 1902.

The claim to Subiya was supported by His Majesty's Government, and, with a view to forestalling an apprehended advance of the Turks, it was occupied by the Sheikh of Koweit. It was pointed out by the Government of India that if Subiya were surrendered Kathama Bay would have to follow suit, and the Turks would then threaten Koweit town. Government of India, Telegraphic, March 18, 1902.

Failaka Island, in Koweit Bay, is indisputably within the jurisdiction of the Sheikh; it has been peopled by his subjects, the Avazem tribe, ever since the occupation of Koweit 300 years ago. India Office, April 9, 1902.

When Colonel Pelly visited Koweit some fifty years ago he described it as "a clean, active town, with a broad and open main bazaar, and numerous solid stone dwelling-houses, containing some 20,000 inhabitants, and attracting Arab and Persian merchants from all quarters by the equity of its rule and by the freedom of its trade. . . . . Under the fostering care of a succession of common-sense Rulers, and by means of a policy wisely originated and systematically pursued, an Arab band of pirates now appear as the masters of the thriving port, the refuge of the oppressed, and the peaceful, free home of all."

He recorded the following opinion on the prospects of the port of Koweit:—

"On the whole, and without endeavouring to change trade from any present channel, I would bear Koweit in mind as a convenient point for a telegraph station, for a coal depôt, for the meeting of sea-going and river steamers and other craft, and as a possible future port of importance."

The present importance of Koweit is principally due to its suitability as a

terminus for the Bagdad Railway.* Attention will be directed to this aspect of the question after the political *status* of Koweit and the relations of the Sheikh with His Majesty's Government have been taken into consideration.

In his Report on the tribes around the shores of the Persian Gulf, Colonel Pelly classified Koweit among the "territories nominally recognizing the suzerainty of the Turkish Government, but practically independent under their own Chiefs," and in a later paragraph he emphasizes the nominal character of the suzerainty.

Colonel Pelly wrote as far back as 1863, but his definition of the *status* of Koweit expresses in a nut-shell the attitude His Majesty's Government have consistently adopted on the question.

In July 1897 Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed that—

To Sir P. Currie, No. 307, July 17, 1897.

"Her Majesty's Government have never admitted that Koweit is under the protection of the Turkish Government. But since it is practically under Turkish influence, it is doubtful whether we could deny the latter."

India Office, September 4, 1899.

On the 23rd January, 1899, the Sheikh signed an Agreement (to be kept absolutely secret) pledging himself not only to cede no territory, but to receive no foreign Representative without British sanction. In return for this he was promised the good offices of Her Majesty's Government, and a payment was made of 15,000 rupees from the Bushire Treasury.

The conclusion of the Agreement, however, involved a serious question regarding the property of the Sheikh in Turkish territory. Aliens are by Turkish law precluded from holding landed property, and it was feared that, if the Sheikh were suspected of having agreed to a British Protectorate, the Turkish authorities would attempt to dispossess Mubarek of his property near Fao. The hope was, therefore, held out that the British Government would "do what they could" to protect him and his brothers in the matter.

Inclosure in India Office, February 14, 1899.

In 1901, rumours of Turkish concentration threatening Koweit raised the larger diplomatic question.

1901.

In July 1901 Sir F. Lascelles had had a conversation with Dr. Rosen, of the German Foreign Office, upon the prospects of the Anatolian Railway and the general situation.

An expression used by his Excellency describing the Sheikh as "technically a subject of the Sultan, but enjoying a considerable amount of independence," which on a previous occasion had passed without comment (see Sir F. Lascelles' No. 156 of the 15th June, 1900), now drew from the German Representative an assertion that the Sheikh was "merely a subject of the Sultan."

To Sir F. Lascelles, No. 128, Telegraphic, August 10, 1901.

It was therefore pointed out to Sir F. Lascelles that the German Government might take advantage of his language to argue that the Sultan could dispose of the territory of the Sheikh. The view that the Sheikh was simply a subject of the Sultan was one that His Majesty's Government were totally unable to accept, and his Excellency was instructed to use language of a more explicit character.

To Sir N. O'Conor, No. 103, Telegraphic, August 10, 1901.

Sir N. O'Conor was at the same time authorized to state, if occasion arose, that if Koweit were threatened, His Majesty's Government would use force to prevent attack.

Important communications now took place at Constantinople and London.

Sir N. O'Conor, Nos. 92 and 93, Telegraphic, August 21, 1901.

Considerable pressure was being exercised on the Ottoman Government by the German and Russian Embassies, and, though a proposal of the Vali of Bussorah to use force against the Sheikh had been rejected by the Council of Ministers, Tewfik Pasha informed Sir N. O'Conor that Koweit was regarded as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. A warning given by the Commander of the "Perseus" to the Captain of a Turkish corvette off Koweit that no troops would be permitted to land was largely magnified in transmission, and occasioned further protests.

Sir N. O'Conor, No. 102, Telegraphic, August 29, 1901.

Tewfik Pasha inquired on the 29th August whether His Majesty's Government intended to establish a Protectorate, and on the same day the German Embassy in London received a pressing instruction to state that a British Protectorate would be contrary to the Treaty of Berlin, and that, in view of her interest in Koweit as the future terminus of the Anatolian Railway, Germany would be compelled to regard such a proceeding as an unfriendly act. The reply in each case was that His

* See also p. 115 respecting Khor Musa in Persia.

Majesty's Government had no such intention, Sir N. O'Conor adding the reservation "provided that Turkey did not force our hands by interfering with the Sheikh."

1901. To Sir F. Lascelles, No. 306. August 29, 1901.

Subsequently, the German Ambassador called to say "that if by threats of force His Majesty's Government prevented the Sultan from landing troops at Koweit, they were refusing to recognize the Sultan's authority with which they had stated (in a Memorandum communicated by the King to the German Emperor) that they did not desire to interfere in those parts, and that the German Government considered that Koweit formed unquestionably part of the territories belonging to the Sultan."

Telegrams were also communicated by the Turkish Ambassador protesting against the reported intention to declare a British Protectorate and describing the Convention of 1899 (the terms of which had leaked out) as without validity, but the Sultan had meanwhile been advised by the German Government to be satisfied with the assurances given to Count Metternich, and to ask for their repetition.

On the 6th September, 1901, Sir N. O'Conor was sent for by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The assurances given by his Excellency on this occasion were considered by the Ottoman Government "of a nature to terminate the present controversy," and Anthopoulo Pasha was instructed to ask for their confirmation.

The following note was accordingly addressed to him:—

"The Marquess of Lansdowne to Anthopoulo Pasha.

"Your Excellency, *"Foreign Office, September* 11, 1901.

"I HAVE taken note with satisfaction of the telegram from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, communicated by you on the 9th instant, in which his Excellency states that the Turkish Government will not send troops to Koweit, and will maintain the *status quo* there, on condition that His Majesty's Government will abstain from occupying that place or establishing a British Protectorate there.

"I have pleasure in confirming the assurance which has been given to his Excellency by His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople that, provided the Turkish Government abstain from sending troops to Koweit and respect the *status quo* there, His Majesty's Government will not occupy that place or establish a British Protectorate over it.

"I am, &c.
(Signed) "LANSDOWNE."

In a Secret telegram dated the 7th September, 1901, Lord Lansdowne, while pointing out that "the situation requires very careful handling as our arrangement with the Sheikh is not very precise, and it was entered into without the knowledge or concurrence of the Porte," instructed Sir N. O'Conor that "we cannot recede from our position, and if the Porte should insist on raising the question of their rights we may have to convert into something much more precise the present indefinite understanding with the Sheikh."

In view, however, of the assurances recorded in the note quoted above, his Excellency did not communicate these instructions during 1901, and the controversy rested for the moment on the basis of a mutual maintenance of the *status quo*. The Turkish Ambassador expressed himself well satisfied with this state of affairs (October 1), and on the same day Sir N. O'Conor was assured by the Minister for Foreign Affairs "most positively that the Imperial Government had no intention whatsoever of occupying or attacking Koweit." An understanding was arrived at that the two Governments were to co-operate in maintaining the peace, Turkey endeavouring to restrain the Amir of Nejd, while His Majesty's Government would do what they could to discourage the Sheikh from aggressive action, and Mubarek was told that the good offices of His Majesty's Government would be extended to him only if he followed their advice.

To Sir F. Lascelles, Nos. 304 and 312, September 11 and 12, 1901.

On the 9th September, 1901, a further communication was made to Count Metternich. A Memorandum upon various subjects, including Koweit, drawn up by Lord Lansdowne for the King's personal use, and handed by His Majesty to the German Emperor at a recent meeting, had elicited a formal reply from the German Government which Count Metternich had lately left at the Foreign Office.

It was now explained to his Excellency that the Memorandum, which had been hastily prepared, was a purely informal and unofficial document. The statement which it contained respecting Koweit was a repetition of Sir N. O'Conor's language in 1900, which was to the effect that Her Majesty's Government had no desire to interfere with the Sultan's authority *as it exists* in those parts. There could be no doubt that this authority was of a very limited description. The Sheikh belonged to a class of native Chiefs enjoying a large measure of practical independence with whom His

1901. Majesty's Government found it necessary to have direct relations for the sake of the maintenance of tranquillity and the protection of British trade. Therefore, although ready to maintain the *status quo*, His Majesty's Government had been unable to acquiesce in attempts recently made by Turkey to impose on the Sheikh conditions from which he had hitherto been free. They had considered it a matter for direct and friendly discussion withthe Porte, who now regarded the incident as closed, and Count Metternich was informed of the assurances exchanged.

To Sir F. Lascelles, No. 321, September 28, 1901.

Lord Lansdowne subsequently said to Count Metternich that it was necessary to bear in mind that where minor Eastern States were concerned it was not unusual to find that they owed a divided allegiance to more than one Power.

To Sir F. Lascelles, No. 337, October 16, 1901.

The German Memorandum states that Koweit has an importance for Germany merely as the proposed terminus of the Bagdad Railway, and gives an undertaking that the Manager of the Railway Company will be instructed to come to an understanding with the British Government when the time for purchasing land for a railway terminus and a landing-place at Koweit shall have come. Count Metternich afterwards confirmed this assurance in conversation with Lord Lansdowne, adding that the railway might be made five years or fifty years hence, or not at all, but that when it was made it was important for Germany to find a peaceful condition of things in that part of the Gulf.

Admiralty, December 31, 1901.

In consequence of a threatened attack by the Emir of Nejd and Turkish troops upon Koweit, the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Pomone," at the request of the Sheikh, landed guns for the fort at Jehara, and made arrangements for the defence of the town. Instructions were given to him to desist from these preparations as soon as Koweit was no longer threatened. Representations on the subject were made by the Turkish Ambassador, who demanded the re-embarkation of the guns and the restoration of the *status quo*. He was informed, in reply, that His Majesty's Government considered their proceedings to be justified so long as danger of attack existed; and subsequently he was told that the guns had been re-embarked.

1902. Early in 1902 the Turks departed from their engagements to maintain the *status quo*, and occupied posts at Um Kasr and Ras-al-Geit, the latter on Bubiyan Island, which is a place of strategic importance, as commanding the approaches to the Khor Abdulla. The Sheikh of Koweit regarded this as a disturbance of the *status quo*, and put forward claims of territorial jurisdiction to both places; and British war-ships were ordered to Koweit in January.

To Admiralty, January 1, 1902.

To Anthopoulo Pasha, January 9, 1902.

To Anthopoulo Pasha, January 15, 1902.

The Government of India took a very serious view of the Turkish action which, it was surmised, was inspired by Germany. They pointed out that with the shores of the mainland and of Bubiyan Island in the hands of a single Power, the anchorages below Um Kasr* could at any time be converted into an impregnable harbour.

To Anthopoulo Pasha, January 25, 1902.

Admiralty, January 1, 1902.

Sir N. O'Conor made repeated representations to the Ottoman Government, but they proved entirely futile in their effect, in so far as the withdrawal of the post on Bubiyan was concerned. As regards Um Kasr and Bubiyan Island, Sir N. O'Conor informed the Porte that the Turkish occupation could not be regarded as in any way prejudicing the Sheikh's rights and authority over them. He intimated that, if the Ottoman Government proceeded to bring matters to a crisis, he would advise his Government not to allow further encroachment, and, if necessary, to prevent it by force.

Sir N. O'Conor, No. 153, April 4, 1902.

The Turkish advance to Subiya was arrested, probably owing to the presence of British war-ships.

India Office, October 10, 1902.

In October 1902, the Government of India reported a request made by Sheikh Mubarak for the gift of two or three guns, presumably to be placed at Jehara for the protection of Koweit against land attack. They proposed to give a refusal, but to intimate to him that His Majesty's Government undertook to defend the Koweit district, provided he complied with the injunction already conveyed to him to observe his engagement to His Majesty's Government, and to follow their advice. Lord Lansdowne concurred in the proposed reply, on the understanding that the "Koweit district" should be clearly defined as the district adjoining or close to the bay of that name. A telegram to this effect was accordingly sent to the Government of India.

India Office, December 4, 1901.

To India Office, October 13, 1902.

To India Office, October 16, 1902.

* It has been suggested that the importance of Um Kasr and Warba Roads is minimized, because the approaches through the Khor Abdulla are becoming silted up. But this appears to rest merely on hearsay and inexpert information.

In reference to an Arab raid from Nejd, made with the cognizance of the Vali of Bussorah, pressure was brought upon the Porte to caution the Vali, and a warning given that His Majesty's Government would not allow an attack upon Koweit.

Sir N. O'Conor, No. 508, November 20, 1902

The importance of securing the withdrawal of the Turkish post from Ras-al-Geit, and of asserting the Sheikh's claim to Bubiyan, and if possible to Warba, was emphasized by an Inter-Departmental Committee in October 1907.

After entirely concurring in the views of the Government of India, the Committee continued:—

"We therefore recommend, if diplomatic considerations permit, that the Sheikh of Koweit should be invited to specify the nature of his claims to Warba Island, to which he is understood frequently to have referred; and that the continued occupation of Bubiyan Island by a Turkish post, in derogation of the Sheikh's territorial claims (which have been recognized and supported by His Majesty's Government), should be neutralized by the establishment forthwith of a Koweiti post, with the countenance of His Majesty's Government, on Warba Island, or, if that should prove undesirable, on the northern shore of Bubiyan Island. If practicable, we would even recommend the establishment of posts on both islands.

"We desire to emphasize the importance which we attach to the effective assertion of the Sheikh's territorial claims to Bubiyan."

Admiralty, November 9, 1907.

The Admiralty concurred in these recommendations, and Sir E. Grey was of opinion that, while it would be desirable to assert any rights which the Sheikh might possess in respect of Warba Island, his jurisdiction over Bubiyan should be resolutely supported by His Majesty's Government on the grounds so forcibly stated by the Government of India.

To India Office, November 12, 1907.

It was decided, in the first instance, to ascertain the nature of the Sheikh's claim to Warba, and this is now being done.

Government of India, February 4, 1904.

On the 15th October, 1907, a Secret Agreement was signed with the Sheikh of Koweit, granting to His Majesty's Government, for a yearly rental of 4,000*l.*, a perpetual lease of a portion of the foreshore at Bunder Shweikh (near Koweit), which is held, on topographical and hydrographical considerations, to possess greater capabilities as a railway terminus than any other place on the Persian Gulf. The Agreement includes rights of pre-emption in regard to Ras Kathama, Warba, and any territory over which the Sheikh may exercise jurisdiction.

This Agreement, and the appointment in 1903 of a British Political Agent to reside at Koweit, have done much to strengthen our position.

Further measures which may be considered advisable are the construction of a lighthouse on Failaka Island or on Kubbar Island (which is considered necessary for navigation purposes) and the erection of a wireless telegraphic apparatus, as proposed at Musandim, Bassidu, and Bahrein, for the more effective suppression of piracy, and as a signal station for passing ships.

It might also be of service to trade if a bank were opened at Koweit.

It should be observed that a delicate point in our relations with the Sheikh is the extent to which we can ignore the traffic in arms which nominally he has prohibited.

(g.) *Mohammerah.*

The town of Mohammerah is situated on the right bank of the Karun River, about a mile above the point where it flows into the Shat-el-Arab. The British India Steam Navigation Company's steamers call weekly, lying at the confluence of the Karun with the Shat-el-Arab. There is considerable communication between Mohammerah and the interior of Persia, while a regular service of steamers is maintained with Ahwaz.

Both Turkey and Persia have raised claims to the ownership of the town and surrounding territory of Mohammerah. The subject is exhaustively dealt with in a Memorandum, dated December 1906, on the Turco-Persian frontier. Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah is the acknowledged Head of a number of Arab tribes on the Karun and Shat-el-Arab. He has considerable armed forces, and as regards the Persian Government, occupies the position of a semi-independent feudal Prince. He also exercises authority over certain Arab tribes in Turkey.

Sheikh Khazal has in recent years undertaken the policing of the Karun in a more effective manner, mainly with a view to secure British good-will.

India Office, April 26, 1904.

In 1904 Major Burton, who acted as British Vice-Consul at Mohammerah, recommended that an Arrangement should be made with the Sheikh, guaranteeing him against the Persian Government. He stated that the Sheikh had extended his power in a very marked manner, and that his territory apparently stretched along the coast as far as Shah Abdul Shah, a few miles west of Dilami, whilst there were few signs of Persian authority south of Band-i-kir to the border of Fars. The Governors of Ahwaz and Mashur were nominated by him; he had done much for the suppression of piracy on the Shat-el-Arab and the safety of the roads and the Karun River in Arabistan; while, if encouraged, he would do more to please the British Government, and might effectively block foreign schemes of irrigation within the limits of his jurisdiction.

This proposal, though at first sight inviting, would prove difficult, if not impossible, in execution, on account of the admissions as to Persian sovereignty made by His Majesty's Government in the course of the negotiations respecting the Turco-Persian frontier.

Foreign Office Memorandum, December 11, 1905.

In 1902 Sheikh Khazal, who for upwards of sixty years had farmed the customs of Mohammerah, entered, with some reluctance, into an Arrangement with the Persian Government to place the administration of the customs under the Belgian Customs officials. At the same time, he pressed His Majesty's Government for an assurance of support in the event of the Persian Government breaking their engagements towards him. While expressing himself able to deal with the Persians, he feared an attempt to coerce him might be made by some other Power, either acting alone or in co-operation with the Shah's Government. His Majesty's Government undertook to protect Mohammerah against naval attack by a foreign Power under any pretext, and also, so long as the Sheikh remained faithful to the Shah and followed British advice, to continue to give him good offices and support.

At a meeting held on the 22nd March, 1905, the Imperial Defence Committee decided:—

> "That it is important to secure the good offices of the Sheikh of Mohammerah, and the possibility of supporting him in certain cases against the Shah should not be excluded; but we must be the judges of the merits of any dispute which may arise."

Mr. Marling, No. 18, Commercial, December 21, 1907.

In December 1907, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran reported that Messrs. Wönckhaus, the German firm, had leased a plot of land on the river bank at Mohammerah for a period of eight years.

(b.) *Persia.*

Most of the authoritative statements on the protection of our interests in Southern Persia and the Gulf have been rendered largely irrelevant by the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention; while another factor, of perhaps corresponding import, is the rise of German influence at Tehran—too recent to admit any definition of its ultimate effect.

In these circumstances, it is peculiarly hard to write upon the situation as it is affected on the Persian littoral of the Gulf; existing information is largely beside the point; the future trend of events is remarkably obscured.

It has accordingly seemed advisable, in considering here the Persian question in relation to the Gulf, to avoid larger and indefinite issues, and to direct attention exclusively, and that only on general lines, to (*a*) a description of the coast-line, and (*b*) the development of trade routes and railway communication.

The first subject could obviously not be omitted in a Memorandum of this character; the second is suggested by the declaration of the German Government, that their interest in Persia is purely commercial. Without seeking to impugn the sincerity of this limitation, it may be doubted whether, at the present day, a distinct line can be drawn between political and commercial relations, the more so since in other quarters German policy has shown such conspicuous success in using the leverage of commercial enterprise for the promotion of political ascendency.

It has been justly said that Persia governs her coast on sufferance. Proverbially timorous of the sea, and possessed of a single vessel of war—the "Persepolis"—under foreign command and at present unseaworthy, the Persians owe their authority, such as it is, to the past exertions and actual presence of British naval officers, who have rendered navigation secure, and thus contributed in no small degree

MAP OF MOHAMMERAH AND DISTRICT PREPARED IN 1850

to the revenue of the Persian exchequer. To show that this statement is not overdrawn, it may be recalled that there is not a single really Persian village or town from Mohammerah, on the Shat-el-Arab, to Gwadur, on the Baluchistan border. Excepting Bushire, every town, village, and island is inhabited by Arabs, with a very small sprinkling of Persian blood among them, over whom the Persian Government would be incapable of asserting authority should any concerted rising take place. Only a few years ago there was a temporary overthrow of Persian authority at Lingah; the Sheikh of Kishm would like to declare his independence; and for some time it was an open question whether the Arabs of Mohammerah would submit to the extension of the new customs régime to that port. Within the past six months there have been serious disturbances at Lingah and Bunder Abbas, and British naval action has been taken against pirates at Dayir on the Persian coast.

The most striking feature of the Persian coast is the absence of good harbours. Bushire, Lingah, and Bunder Abbas are merely open roadsteads, where a landing can sometimes be effected only with difficulty, and for days it may be impossible to work cargo. At Bushire cargo can indeed be brought alongside the customs-house in almost any weather, provided the lighters can approach the steamers, which remain at over 2 miles from the shore. The position could be immeasurably improved by dredging. At Bunder Abbas a good harbour could be constructed by utilizing the deep water of the Clarence Straits, which separate the Island of Kishm from the mainland.

The importance of Bunder Abbas, with the adjacent Islands of Kishm, Henjam, and Hormuz, as a naval station, was the subject of much official correspondence between 1900 and 1905, and was emphasized by an Inter-Departmental Committee which met in October 1907.

A point of the Persian coast which calls for special mention on account of its suitability as a terminus for the Bagdad Railway is Khor Musa, near the Shat-el-Arab. Admiralty, August 7, 1903.

This Khor was surveyed by two British naval officers in 1903.

Turning now to the subject of trade routes and the development of railway communication, the ports which command caravan routes are Bunder Abbas, Bushire, and Mohammerah, while Bussorah, in Turkish territory, is a principal artery for trade in transit to Persia viâ Bagdad and Kermanshah.

The Bunder Abbas roads to Kerman and Yezd are very insecure on account of brigands, and the road from Bushire to Shiraz is arduous and difficult. The transport rates are subject to great fluctuation; but, striking an average, Mr. Whigham, in his book "The Persian Problem," points out that whereas it costs 30*s.* a ton to carry goods from London to Bushire, the transport thence to Shiraz (183 miles) costs 87*s.*, and the charge from Bushire to Ispahan may be estimated at 10*l.*

The Ahwaz–Ispahan road, constructed for the Bakhtiari Khans by Messrs. Lynch, has brought Ispahan within much closer proximity to the sea, and, in point of distance, is a great improvement on the Bushire–Shiraz–Ispahan route.

The opening of roads is indeed desirable in order to feed the trade of the Gulf; but it has been forcibly urged that no marked development of commerce can take place until railway construction has been entered upon, and that a single line joining Bunder Abbas or Bushire with the plateau would be of incalculable service in this connection, since it would reduce the time of the journey from the coast to Ispahan from thirty days to twenty-four hours, and the cost of transport from 10*l.* a ton to 1*l.*

Moreover, it is by no means improbable—the German Minister for Foreign Affairs alluded to the contingency in conversation with Sir E. Grey—that the promoters of the Bagdad Railway may seek to secure an extension across the Turkish frontier, and the situation which now causes anxiety to His Majesty's Government in Mesopotamia may perhaps find a counterpart in the south of Persia. That such a consummation would be prejudicial to our interests does not appear to require demonstration; and a Concession of this nature should assuredly be forestalled by the acquisition of prior rights, to which, in virtue of undertakings of the late Shah* and his predecessor, His Majesty's Government are already in some degree entitled.

The most natural route for a railway would perhaps be the prolongation of the Khanikin branch from Bagdad viâ Kermanshah, Sultanabad, and Ispahan to Yezd, with branches to Dizful and Mohammerah and to Kerman and Bunder Abbas. The provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention would occasion some deviation from this line, but the trunk line could be modified to meet the exigencies of the political

* See Appendix (B), p. 142.

situation, while a beginning would necessarily be made with the branches which rest on the sea.

For the present, questions of actual construction are premature; it is only desirable, in order to guard against a needless surrender to German competition, to enter a *veto* at Tehran.

The following letter, dated the 25th September, 1907, contains the views of Sir E. Grey on the subject of railway construction:—

"I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to state, for the information of the Secretary of State for India, that he has recently had under consideration the effect which the signature of the Anglo-Russian Convention is likely to exercise, sooner or later, upon the question of railway construction in Persia.

"As you are aware, the Convention provides that neither of the Contracting Powers shall, without previous arrangement between them, oppose the grant of Concessions supported by the other within the limits of the neutral zone, where equality of commercial opportunity is likewise recognized to the subjects of third Powers.

"It may, indeed, safely be surmised that other Powers will not be slow to appreciate the changed situation, and to seek to turn it to advantage.

"Although the Russo-Persian Railway Convention has still some years to run, the question of future railway construction in Persia, and the pledges made to His Majesty's Government by the two late Shahs must not be lost sight of, and a timely decision should be taken as to what Concessions it would be most conducive to the interests of British policy to obtain for railway construction in Southern Persia.

"In these circumstances, it seems advisable that His Majesty's Government should take into early consideration the question of a possible attempt to extend the Bagdad Railway into Southern Persia, with a view to determining whether a Concession of this nature to other Powers should be opposed, or whether it should be forestalled by timely action on the part of His Majesty's Government, who, by securing prior rights of construction, might render an extension of the Bagdad Railway under foreign auspices economically undesirable.

"Sir E. Grey is unwilling that the history of the Bagdad Railway Concession, which at one time could have been secured to British enterprise, should find a counterpart in Persia. Moreover, the extension of the Bagdad Railway, as a *foreign undertaking*, in the direction of the Indian frontier, would, on strategic grounds, appear to be inadmissible; the grant of such a Concession would compel the opposition of His Majesty's Government, and a sharp diplomatic conflict would ensue, whereas by the exercise of foresight such a crisis might be averted altogether.

"Turning now to the question of what specific action His Majesty's Government should take to the end in view, it appears to Sir E. Grey that a British Concession for a railway from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz might prove financially advantageous, while it would seem to offer no strategic objections from the point of view of the defence of India. Such a line would absorb all the traffic which has hitherto passed from Bushire and Ahwaz to the north of Persia, and would result in the material improvement of the port of Bunder Abbas, now in the British sphere, and greatly increase its value and importance. The Concession might include the right to continue the line to Ahwaz or elsewhere in Arabistan, and to effect a junction with the Bagdad Railway—such extension to be left to the discretion of the concessionnaire.

"An alternative scheme, which deserves examination, is whether it would be either desirable or practicable to unite the Indian railway system with the Bagdad Railway.

"This scheme raises strategic considerations which fall within the province of the Government of India and the Committee of Imperial Defence.

"It may well be thought expedient, for strategic reasons, to oppose altogether the progress of railway construction towards the Indian frontier. Be this as it may, it would appear that the difficulty of meeting German competition in the neutral zone in Persia is likely to increase from year to year, and it may prove that a railway such as that referred to would, in British hands, be the most effective means of anticipating a German commercial advance into Southern Persia in the future, thus becoming the source of protection rather than of weakness in the defence of India.

"As to the economic aspects of the scheme, it may be regarded as likely that the existence of such a line would make British co-operation in the Bagdad Railway more welcome to the Germans, since it would increase the volume of through traffic. While passengers would hesitate to travel by the Bagdad Railway with the necessity

of breaking the journey on arrival at the Persian Gulf, the convenience of a through carriage from Calais to India could not fail to make itself felt; further, the economy of time would be considerable, and of especial value in the transmission of mails.

"The objections of the Russian Government might be such as to render the enterprise inadvisable, though these objections could not fairly extend to the British 'sphere' of influence; but, in Sir E. Grey's opinion, there is no reason to believe that they would prove insurmountable if on mature consideration the enterprise should be deemed advantageous.

"Sir E. Grey is of opinion that the whole question should be submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defence, in order that His Majesty's Government may be in a position to decide upon a definite line of policy. . . .

"The subject of British participation in the Bagdad Railway may possibly be raised on the occasion of the approaching visit of the German Emperor to this country; and, both on this account and for the reasons already explained, it is desirable that a decision on the questions raised should not be unduly delayed."

(i.) *Bassidu.*

Bassidu is situated at the western extremity of Kishm Island, which lies parallel to the Persian Coast, from which it is separated by Clarence Strait.

It has a good anchorage, for vessels of moderate draught, about a third of a mile off shore. For landing purposes there is a low stone pier, about 80 yards in length, extending to low-water mark.

It was once a flourishing Portuguese Settlement, and the ruins of the old town are still in existence.

The British occupation appears to have begun in 1820, under a verbal grant from Sultan Syed Saeed of Muscat, who then exercised jurisdiction over the island. This was confirmed by Agreement with his son and successor, Sultan Thoweynee, in 1861. In spite of the fact that Kishm had been taken in 1852 by Persia, and leased in 1855 to Muscat, the Persian Government took no exception to the British occupation of Bassidu, either when they leased Kishm to Muscat in 1845 [? 1855], when the lease was renewed in 1868, or when it was forcibly terminated in the latter year. India Office, March 20, 1899.

The Government of India, in their despatch No. 66 of the 2nd May, 1901, state:—

Note.—The India Office letters of the 30th October, 1901, and the 7th January, 1902, deal with the limits of British jurisdiction at Bassidu. The India Office letter of the 10th July, 1901, deals with British Government buildings. The Admiralty letter of the 21st March, 1902, incloses a report on the Islands of Kishm and Hormuz.

"We already possess a plot of British territory at Bassidu on Kishm Island. . . . Your Lordship is aware of the conditions under which we hold possession of Bassidu. Though we no longer use the place as a coaling depôt, we keep an agent there, who flies the British flag. . . . There are no independent local Chiefs with whom we could enter into relations. With the exception of the tract in our possession at Bassidu the islands are under Persian authority."

Again, the Government of India wrote, in their despatch No. 92 of the 29th May, 1902:—

"The circumstances connected with the British occupation of Bassidu are already known to your Lordship. The settlement dates from 1820; but our occupation has for many years been indicated only by the presence of a native coal agent, who, however, has habitually flown the British flag."

The place was for many years (from 1823 till 1879) the head-quarters of the Indian Marine; and it is one of the healthiest places near the entrance to the Gulf.

On the 6th May, 1903, the India Office stated that the Russian Consul at Bushire had made inquiries as to the nature of the British position at Bassidu, and had been informed of the situation by the French Agent at Lingah.

In the Admiralty letter of the 21st March, 1902, a report is inclosed from Rear-Admiral Bosanquet, in which he says:—

"Kishm is, in my opinion, the most important strategical position in the Persian Gulf, from a naval point of view, and its possession would be very important to us as a port for our mercantile marine and a coaling station for our ships of war."

On the 10th November, 1902, a Conference, consisting of delegates of the Foreign Office, India Office, War Office, and Admiralty, was held at the Foreign Office, and amongst other recommendations as to the methods in which the extension of British influence could be most successfully prosecuted, and to the best advantage for general purposes, it was advised that "we should reassert our claims at Bassidu."

It does not appear that any very definite action has been taken in pursuance of this recommendation, though it is recorded in the Minutes of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

An Inter-Departmental Committee of delegates from the Foreign Office, India Office, and Admiralty, in submitting a report (dated October 1907) on the terminus of the Bagdad Railway, recommended incidentally that such steps as His Majesty's Government might consider feasible should be taken to consolidate our position at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, including Kishm.

It has been suggested that the ruined buildings at Bassidu should be pulled down, and a small meteorological station under a British-Indian subject established. A depôt for stores for the ships-of-war in the Gulf might also be created, and it is worth considering whether a wireless telegraphic apparatus should not be installed for convenience of communication.

(j.) *The Islands of Abu Musa, Tumb, and Sirri.*

Abu Musa and Tumb.

In January 1903 Colonel Kemball, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, reported that, in consequence of the short-sighted policy of the Belgian Customs officials, trade had to a large extent been diverted from the Persian port of Lingah, and local merchants were endeavouring to arrange with the Bombay and Persian Navigation Company to make the Island of Abu Musa a port of call, apparently for the purpose of facilitating their pearl business.

Colonel Kemball was apprehensive lest such a conjuncture should result in a territorial claim to this island being advanced by the Persian Government who, in 1888, had laid claim to and hoisted their flag on the adjacent Island of Sirri.

India Office; July 23, 1903.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that, writing on the 28th April, 1888, Colonel Ross, then British Resident, had expressed a decided opinion that no valid claim to Abu Musa could be advanced by the Persian Government, while any attempt to assert their authority in a practical form would probably lead to disturbances.

Colonel Kemball stated that the island undoubtedly belonged to the Jowasmi Sheikh of Shargah (one of the Trucial Chiefs under British protection). In the winter it was usually visited by people from Khan and Shargah for purposes of fishing and grazing. In the pearling season these people were in the habit of migrating, and the sole inhabitants remaining were three men whose duty was to tend the date trees belonging to Sheikh Salem, the uncle of the Sheikh of Shargah.

The Jowasmis did not fly a flag on the island, and Colonel Kemball submitted that it might be well to advise the Sheikh of Shargah to do so as a sign of ownership.

This course was approved by the Government of India, and on the 30th April, 1903, Colonel Kemball reported that the Sheikh had issued orders accordingly.

The Government of India at the same time instructed the Resident to furnish his observations on the expediency of advising the Sheikh of Ras-el-Kheimah to adopt a similar course in regard to the Island of Tumb, which apparently belonged to that section of the Jowasmis.

Foreign Office Memorandum of July 30, 1903.

(In 1888, on the occupation of Sirri, the Sheikh of Shargah had urged that the Persians should be prevented from pursuing a similar course at Tumb.)

Inclosure in Colonel Ross to Tehran of August 19, 1888 (see Government of

Colonel Kemball replied that the Persian Government had never asserted sovereignty over the island; that the Sheikh of Shargah, in his existing capacity as Ruler of Ras-el-Kheimah, claimed it as an appanage of the Jowasmis of the Arab Coast, urging that it was visited by his subjects on account of the good water supply and for purposes of grazing; that the Sheikh was in possession of documentary evidence, in the shape of three letters from two Arab Sheikhs of Lingah, admitting the claim of the Jowasmis of the Arab Coast as against that of the Jowasmis of Lingah; and, finally, that in one of these letters, written in 1877, the Sheikh of Lingah had conceded that the Persians had no property there, nor any right of interference, save with the consent of the Chief of Ras-el-Kheimah.

The Government of India hereupon directed that the Chief of Shargah should be advised, as in the case of Abu Musa, to hoist his flag on the Island of Tumb. India Proceedings, September 1880.

In April 1904 the Viceroy of India telegraphed that the Belgian officials in charge of the Persian Customs had placed guards on Abu Musa and Tumb, forcibly removed the Arab flags, erected new flagstaffs, and hoisted the Persian flag in both islands. India Office, April 14, 1904.

The Sheikh of Shargah, on hearing of this encroachment, declared that he could not tolerate the action of the Persian authorities, and, in virtue of Treaty relations, appealed to His Majesty's Government to take the necessary steps with a view to preventing such interference with his territory. India Office, May 4, 1904.

Major Cox, the British Resident, in commenting subsequently on the irresponsible action of the Customs officials on this occasion, wrote as follows:— India Office, August 19, 1904.

"I would observe, in conclusion, that signs are not wanting to my mind to incline me to the belief that if we do not maintain a vigorous policy in connection with these islands in the Gulf, it will not be long before we are confronted with difficulties in regard to the adjacent pearl fisheries, the preservation of which under the time-honoured conditions has always been one of the fundamental features of our policy in these waters."

The Government of India took a serious view of the incident, and proposed to dispatch a gun-boat to the islands, with a representative of the Sheikh of Shargah on board, to haul down the Persian flag, reinstate the Jowasmi flag, and remove the guards to Persian territory.

It was decided, however, in the first instance to make representations to the Persian Government, and on the 24th May His Majesty's Minister reported that they had telegraphed orders to Bushire to remove the flags and guards from Abu Musa and Tumb, while reserving their right to discuss with His Majesty's Government the respective claims to the island. Sir A. Hardinge, No. 6, Telegraphic, May 24, 1904.

The following is the text of a note addressed by His Majesty's Minister to the Persian Government on the 15th June, 1904:—

"Your Excellency,

"I have had the honour to receive your note of yesterday's date respecting Tumb and Abu Musa, and shall be happy to transmit to the Government of India any proofs with which you may favour me that the claims of the Persian Government to the ownership of these islands outweigh those of the Sheikh of Shargah. Sir A. Hardinge, No. 104, June 15, 1904.

"Your Excellency must, however, understand that I cannot agree to the suggestion, of which I hear for the first time, that this Trucial Chief should not be permitted to replace his flag pulled down by the Persian Customs officials, and I would remind you in this connection that we have not insisted upon the Persian Government removing their flag from the Island of Sirri till the controversy between the two Governments as to the ownership of the island, which originated many years ago, has been reciprocally settled. The position would have been different if the Sheikh of Shargah had removed an existing Persian flag from Tumb and Abu Musa. What he did was to hoist his own flag upon the islands, which were not yet formally occupied by any other Government, and he has the right to fly it as the first occupant, till his lawful possession of these islands is disproved."

In June 1904 Major Cox entered into communication with the Chief of Shargah, as Head Sheikh of the Jowasmi, respecting the rehoisting of the Jowasmi flags. India Office, September 29, 1904.

Flagstaffs were erected on both islands and guards stationed there, and the Chiefs and inhabitants of the Pirate Coast were glad, and felt assured that the British Government would protect them against enemies and would maintain their honour, and the people highly praised the British Government.

M. Naus, the Belgian Director of Customs, informed Sir A. Hardinge, in May 1904, that the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs had told him that the Persian claim to Tumb and Sirri was sound, but that to Abu Musa was more doubtful. No further Persian claim to Tumb and Abu Musa has been reported since 1904. Sir A. Hardinge, No. 91, May 24, 1904.

Sirri.

In June 1904 the Government of India instructed the Resident in the Persian Gulf to forward a report on the actual situation at Sirri, which the Persian Government had occupied in 1888, as it might be convenient to reopen the question of the legality of the Persian occupation if the Persian Government should afford an opportunity by questioning the status of Abu Musa and Tumb. India Office, August 19, 1904.

Sir A. Hardinge, No. 135, July 23, 1904.

Major Cox reported that His Majesty's Government had never in any way admitted, or withdrawn their original objections to, the claim of the Shah's Government to the ownership of the island; while it was equally clear from the records of the Residency that the Jowasmi Arab Sheikhs of the Pirate Coast had never voluntarily dropped their claim to proprietary rights over Sirri any more than over Abu Musa and Tamb. As late as 1895 the said Sheikhs had declared that, although the Chief of Shargah on their behalf had duly represented to the British Government that the ownership of the island was vested in him, as Chief of the Jowasmis, the British Government had refrained from moving in the matter, and that they themselves had consequently been unable to enforce their rights by their own unaided efforts.

A full précis of the correspondence relating to the occupation of Sirri is contained in a letter, dated Bushire, the 19th August, 1888, from Colonel Ross to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran (*vide* Government of India Proceedings, September 1888, No. 104).

(*Vide supra.*)

Sir Arthur Hardinge, in commenting on the correspondence between Major Cox and the Government of India, deprecated raising the case of Sirri, unless the Persian Government forced the question upon His Majesty's Government, since the latter were face to face with an occupation in which they had acquiesced for very many years, though they had not formally recognized it.

He added that M. Naus had consented to strike out Sirri from the list of Customs ports enumerated in the "Règlement Douanier."

Part III.—COMMERCE.

(a.) *The Pearl Fisheries.*

The pearl fisheries constitute so important a factor in the general policy of His Majesty's Government in the Persian Gulf, that considerable space is allotted to the consideration of this subject, and the three principal papers which bear upon it are quoted *in extenso*. These are—

(I.) A despatch from the Government of India dated the 10th March, 1904;

(II.) A Report submitted by the Law Officers of the Crown to Lord Lansdowne, dated the 11th February, 1905; and

(III.) A despatch to the Viceroy from the Secretary of State for India, dated the 31st March, 1905.

1.

"In the course of our recent examination of problems connected with the Persian Gulf, the question of the pearl fisheries that have so long existed there has come under our notice. Important questions, both of policy and international law, are involved; and although none of these has fortunately hitherto assumed an acute shape, it seems to us desirable that the matter should be considered now, in order that we may know how to act should any sudden or unexpected development occur. We therefore address you on the subject.

"The approximate limits of the pearling grounds in the neighbourhood of the Arab littoral are indicated on the inclosed copy of a chart of the Gulf. In addition to those marked, there are also shoals in the neighbourhood of Kharak Island, and at other points along the Persian coast, which are regularly exploited, and frequently yield considerable returns. We are immediately concerned, however, only with those lying on the Arabian side of the Gulf. Along this coast lie the territories of the several Trucial Chiefs, the Peninsula of El Katr, the Island of Bahrein, the Turkish Province of El Hassa, and the domains of the Sheikh of Koweit. The pearl banks appear from time immemorial to have been open, without distinction, to the Arabs of the entire littoral; and though there are no definite inter-tribal limits, the external boundaries of the fisheries are well known. Intrusion is resented; the principal Chiefs have in the past expressed the view that the fisheries are common property, and that no Chief has therefore the right to grant any Concession to outside parties; and, believing as they do that the shallower waters are dependent

on the deeper for their supply of shells, their objections relate not only to interference on the shoals which are habitually fished by their dependents, but also to the exploitation of the deeper waters beyond.

"His Majesty's Government are aware of the close relations which exist between the Arabs of this coast and the Indian Government. Since 1843 we have held from the Trucial Chiefs agreements to refrain from any breach of the peace at sea, and in 1892 the Sheikhs concluded fresh compacts, binding themselves not to enter into any Agreement or correspondence with any Power other than the British Government; not to consent, except with the permission of the British Government, to the residence within their territories of the Agent of any other State; and not to cede, sell, mortgage, or otherwise give occupation of any portion of their territories, save to the British Government. In respect of El Katr, we have at present no formal Conventions. We have declined, however, to recognize Turkish pretensions on the peninsula, and the leading Chief has on more than one occasion approached our officers in the Gulf with a request that he may be admitted to closer relations with the Indian Government. Bahrein has for long been, to all intents and purposes, a British Protectorate; while, in the case of Koweit, though the Turks have laid claim to certain ill-defined rights of sovereignty, we have always asserted that the Sheikh enjoys a large measure of practical independence, and His Majesty's Government have promised him their good offices. The maintenance of the maritime peace in the Gulf is an object which, for more than a century past, we have steadily kept in view in all our dealings with the Arab tribes. To secure this object we have prohibited the use of armed boats by the Chiefs, and have taken upon ourselves the duty of policing all these waters. A necessary corollary of this policy is that the Chiefs cannot themselves adopt forcible measures for the preservation of their monopoly in connection with the pearl fisheries. It is clear, therefore, that we on our part owe to them an obligation to defend their rights so far as they can reasonably be substantiated. This duty carries with it incidentally the advantage that, if our right to police the pearl banks is recognized, a large area of the Gulf becomes at once practically British waters.

"In the past we have on more than one occasion intervened to prevent the intrusion of foreigners. In 1863 a British steamer appeared in the Gulf with trained divers and scientific appliances, but the steps which were at once taken by the Resident, with the approval of the Bombay Government, sufficed to frustrate the attempted encroachment. In 1874, and again in 1890, Her Majesty's Government, on the advice of the Government of India, declined to countenance proposals made by British Companies to exploit the fisheries. In 1894 support was refused to an application by a British subject to the Persian Government for pearling Concessions in the Gulf. In 1899, in connection with the alleged grant of certain privileges to two Europeans by the Persian Government, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh was informed by Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran that no contract could be recognized which would have the effect of interfering with the rights exercised by Chiefs under British protection. In 1901 Sir Nicholas O'Conor, hearing of a project which was under the consideration of the Porte to tax the fisheries, acquainted Tewfik Pasha with the objections which Her late Majesty's Government saw to any action which would interfere with the prescriptive rights of our protected tribes. In 1902 our local officers declined to countenance the project of a British Indian subject, who proposed to obtain facilities for pearling in Abu Dhabi waters. Finally, in 1903, Colonel Kemball reported that two Frenchmen, named Dumas and Castelin, had arrived in Bahrein with the intention of prospecting the pearl banks round that island. The Chief refused to entertain their proposals, and subsequently the strangers left the neighbourhood, one for Turkish Arabia, and the other for Europe, where it was believed that he intended to engage a professional diver. He has, however, not yet reappeared. In connection with the last-mentioned case, we have informed our Political Resident in the Persian Gulf that we entirely approve Sheikh Esa's attitude, and that, in the event of either of these Frenchmen returning to Bahrein, the Chief should refuse to render assistance of any description; that any other Chief who may be similarly approached should return a similar response; and that the Government of India should at once be informed of any renewal of the project, or of any like attempt. We inclose, for your information, a copy of the recent correspondence on this subject.

"We have thus succeeded hitherto in staving off outside interference. We recognize, however, that our position in the matter is in certain respects difficult, and that in the future the same success may not attend measures which in the past have sufficed to attain our object. The question involves considerations, firstly, of private, and, secondly, of international law. Our rights in restraining foreign interference are,

it appears to us, at any rate commensurate with those of the Arab tribes concerned, since these have agreed to leave the protection of their interests in our hands; and the question which we may hereafter be called upon to answer, whether in defending a civil suit in a British Court, or in meeting an international claim, must be the same, namely, the extent of the rights and jurisdiction possessed by the Arab Chiefs. The chart which we inclose shows that the pearl banks extend to considerable distances from the mainland or from any island. Within the 3-mile limit it seems evident that no difficulty need be encountered, and that the rights over the pearl banks, and the jurisdiction required to assert those rights, are indisputable. Beyond this zone, however, the case is less clear. We understand that it has become an uncontested principle of modern international law that the sea, as a general rule, cannot be subjected to appropriation. At the same time, we believe that it is admitted that portions of the sea may be affected by proprietary rights on the part of the States whose territories it adjoins, and that such rights have been more especially recognized in the case of fisheries, to which the inhabitants of a neighbouring State have established a claim through immemorial exercise of the right of fishing. There can be no doubt that the rights of which they now claim the exclusive enjoyment have been exercised by the Arabs of these coasts from time immemorial; and we consider, therefore, that the fact of these fisheries being in part outside the limits of territorial waters need not necessarily constitute a conclusive bar to the claim. In the pearl fisheries of Ceylon we have a precedent for the exercise of jurisdiction beyond the 3-mile limit under the Colonial Act of 1811, which authorizes the seizure and condemnation of any boat found within the limits of, or hovering near, the pearl banks extending from 6 to 21 miles from the coast; and it may be observed that, in the recent Behring Sea Arbitration, the United States of America cited the Ceylon precedent as justifying their exercise of possession in, and control over, seal fisheries beyond the zone of territorial waters as ordinarily recognized by international law. It is also worth noting that the above contention is supported by the authority of the Swiss publicist, Vattel, who in his "Droits des Gens" remarked, in discussing the question as far back as the eighteenth century, "Qui doutera que les pêcheries de perles de Bahrein et de Ceylan ne puissent légitimement tomber en propriété?" We believe, therefore, that our claim to exclude all foreign pearling vessels from the limits of the fisheries at present worked by the tribes within our Protectorate might, if challenged, be defended with a reasonable chance of success.

"There remains, however, the case of foreign exploitation of deep waters outside the spheres in which we believe that it may be shown that immemorial usage and occupation have conferred prescriptive rights. In this still wider area we doubt whether we possess claims in support of which we could appeal to any law or international practice, and we fear that possible detriment to the pearl banks in which we hold prescriptive rights would furnish no valid ground for objecting to legitimate foreign enterprise outside the sphere of Arab occupation; but by authorizing the Chiefs to abstain from all intercourse with such interlopers, and to utilize the powers which they possess of interdicting the importation of foreign diving appliances, of refusing to lend any assistance in men, boats, or in any other form, or, if necessary in the last resort, of removing any such foreigner from their territories, we might succeed in putting such serious impediments in the way of such enterprises as would discourage outsiders from engaging in them.

"The question is fortunately not one in which we are at present called upon to decide as to the exact nature of the rights or the precise limits of the jurisdiction which the several Chiefs possess, and which we, as the paramount Power, are bound to assert and maintain on their behalf; but in view of the possibility of further attempts, whether by British Companies or by foreign capitalists, we think it advisable to be prepared in advance. We shall, therefore, be glad to know whether His Majesty's Government concur in the views above set forth, and to receive any instructions which it may be deemed advisable to issue for the guidance of our local officers in the event of renewed adventures of a more determined character."

II.

"We were honoured with your Lordship's commands, signified in Sir Eldon Gorst's letter of the 19th October last transmitting to us the accompanying papers, relative to the question of the steps to be taken to prevent foreign interference with the rights enjoyed by the tribes on the Arabian coast of the

Persian Gulf in the pearl fisheries, and requesting us to favour your Lordship with our opinion—

"1. As to the legal rights of the tribes within, as also without, the 3-mile territorial limit.

"2. As to the procedure to be followed in expelling interlopers, and dealing with their boats and fishing appliances.

"We have taken the matter into our consideration, and, in obedience to your Lordship's commands, have the honour to report—

"1. That the tribes have a right to the exclusive use of the pearl fisheries within the 3-mile limit, and in any other waters which may justly be considered territorial.

"As regards the fisheries beyond territorial waters, we think that a distinction must be drawn between the *banks* where the tribes have practised pearl fishing and the *deep waters* in which no such fishery has been carried on by them.

"As regards the pearl banks, we think that, as a matter of international law, they are capable of being the property of the tribes to the exclusion of all nations. In addition to the passage cited from Vattel, reference may be made to Puffendorff's Treatise 'De jure Naturæ et gentium,' Book IV, chapter v, section 7, and to the recent work of Professor Westlake, 'International Law,' Part I, chapter ix, at pp. 186 and 187, and the case of the protection of the Ceylon pearl banks is a striking illustration of the assertion of this right in practice. Whether such rights in fact exist with regard to these particular pearl banks in the Persian Gulf is a question the answer to which cannot be given with any certainty, as it depends on the evidence available of historical facts with reference to the enjoyment of these fisheries by the tribes and the exclusion of others from them. As far as we can judge, upon the materials before us, we think that there are grounds for asserting the existence of such an exclusive right, and we do not think that in point of law the fact that the enjoyment was by the tribes in-common would prevent the acquisition of the right in question. Having regard to the relations of His Majesty's Government with the tribes on the west shore of the Persian Gulf, we think that the existence of this exclusive right may be properly maintained on their behalf by His Majesty's Government.

"With regard to the deep waters in which pearl fishing has not been carried on by the tribes, we think the case is different. There is here no defined area at the bottom of the sea over which the right of fishing has been exercised to the exclusion of other nations, as there is some ground for saying was the case with regard to the pearl banks. We cannot see that the right claimed by the tribes to exclude other nations from these deeper waters could be asserted with any reasonable chance of success.

"2. Having regard to the importance of protecting the deeper waters and to the fact that for the reasons above indicated it cannot be regarded as certain that the right, even to the pearl banks, could be established to the satisfaction of any international Tribunal, we think that it would be preferable to discourage foreign interference by refusing supplies, &c., as suggested in the papers before us. If such measures prove inadequate it may be necessary, having obtained the authority of the Chiefs for this purpose, to compel the removal of vessels engaged in fishing on the pearl banks. Of course, measures of this kind must be taken with caution, as international complications might result from any precipitate action. It might also be practicable—whether it should be done or not is a matter of policy—to raise the question in a form suitable for decision by The Hague Tribunal.

"Fishing within the territorial waters may, of course, be prevented.

"Generally. We desire to add that, having regard to the importance of the question to the tribes, and the fact that we cannot be certain of establishing the right claimed, it is probably desirable that the fishing by foreigners should, if possible, be indirectly stopped without raising the question internationally.

"We have, &c.,

(Signed) "R. B. Finlay.

"Edward Carson."

III.

"On receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 10th March, 1904, on the question of the pearl fisheries in the Persian Gulf, I entered into communication with the

Foreign Office with a view to obtaining the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon the legal and international points raised by your Excellency's Government.

"2. I inclose herewith, for the information and guidance of the Government of India, a copy of the correspondence."

"3. Your Excellency will see that the Law Officers of the Crown have no doubt as to the rights of the tribes in such waters as may justly be considered territorial. Outside territorial waters, they are inclined to hold that the exclusive rights of the tribes might be maintained to banks in regard to which their exclusive possession is capable of historical proof; but they consider that the point is not free from doubt. In regard to the deeper waters, they are of opinion that there would be no reasonable chance of asserting with success the right of the tribes to debar other nations from dredging.

"4. In these circumstances, I agree with the general conclusion at which the Law Officers of the Crown have arrived, viz., that it is not expedient to raise the question internationally by forcibly preventing vessels of foreign nationalities from fishing on the banks. The object in view may probably be attainable by indirect methods."

Summary.

The situation in regard to the pearl fisheries may be summarized as follows:—

The Law Officers of the Crown have laid it down that outside territorial limits, in the deeper waters, there would be no reasonable chance, on grounds of international law, of asserting with success the right of the tribes to debar other nations from dredging. On the other hand, it is apprehended that dredging operations, if carried out on scientific principles, even in the deeper waters alone, would seriously endanger the success of the pearl fishing on the banks, in regard to which the tribes may establish exclusive rights.

The conclusion formulated in 1905 was accordingly that foreign vessels should not forcibly be prevented from fishing on the banks, but that the object in view might probably be attainable by "indirect methods," *i.e.*:—

"By authorizing the Chiefs to abstain from all intercourse with such interlopers, and to utilize the powers which they possess of interdicting the importation of foreign diving appliances, of refusing to lend any assistance in men, boats, or in any other form, or, if necessary, in the last resort, of removing any such foreigner from their territories."

It can hardly be maintained that this solution is satisfactory; the pursuit of such a course even if effective in its immediate object, might not improbably give rise in practice to a sharp diplomatic conflict, and result in the serious discomfiture of His Majesty's Government, whose guiding principle of free trade in the Gulf would appear as of varying interpretation, while its assertion would clearly be sacrificed to meet the exigencies of a critical situation.

With the rapid extension of German enterprise in these regions the pearl fisheries are not unlikely to receive considerable attention within the next few years, and it appears eminently desirable to determine whether a situation at present fraught with danger and uncertainty cannot be regularized in a manner likely to conciliate conflicting interests.

His Majesty's Government are at present on the horns of a dilemma—on the one hand, they cannot prevent dredging operations by foreigners; on the other, they are faced with the knowledge that such operations will render destitute a large number of Arabs, who in default of the pearl fisheries, must either starve or turn pirates (see p. 13).

For the welfare and the tranquillity of these tribes His Majesty's Government are by prescription responsible; to secure these objects British lives and money have been sacrificed on a large scale; and to abandon now the policy of a century would be both misguided and pusillanimous.

An alternative course would be to approach foreign Governments and to explain the peculiarity of the situation; the measures taken in the course of the last 100

* Not printed.

years to suppress piracy and to maintain order; the interest of all who frequent the Gulf in the tranquillity of the tribes inhabiting the coasts; the complications to which the introduction of scientific appliances in the pearl fisheries would inevitably give rise; the justice and expediency of securing to the Arabs, under time-honoured conditions, the exclusive enjoyment of a necessary means of livelihood; and, finally, the prospect of establishing, in the island of Bahrein, a free mart where merchants of every nation could purchase on equal terms the pearls supplied by native enterprise.

I.—Table showing the Total Number and Tonnage of British and Foreign Steam-ships that entered the various Ports of the Persian Gulf in 1905 and 1906.

	Bahrein.				Bunder Abbas.				Bushire.				Bussorah.			
	1905.		1906.		1905.		1906.		1905.		1906.		1905.		1906.	
	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.
British	65	95,097	71	100,383	150	225,000	155	252,500	153	192,563	153	221,333	163	182,180	166	209,779
Austro-Hungarian	..	..	4	6,205	..	..	7	14,000	..	..	6	14,588	1	1,125	6	9,411
German	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Greek	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1,138	..	..	1	1,138
Norwegian	..	..	..	..	8	16,000	10	20,000	5	5,715	5	6,819	5	6,135	6	7,419
Russian	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2,000	..	..	1	1,360	..	..	1	1,380
Turkish	..	..	1	3,943	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
United States	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	65	95,097	76	111,131	158	241,000	173	268,500	158	198,278	166	245,236	169	189,440	180	229,127

Proportion of British Steam-shipping, 1906.

	Bahrein.	Bunder Abbas.	Bushire.	Bussorah.	Total of the Four Ports.
Tons	Per cent. 91	Per cent. 87	Per cent. 90	Per cent. 91	Per cent. 90

II.—Table showing the Total Value of British and Foreign Imports to the various Ports of the Persian Gulf in 1905–6.

Bahrein.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Imports to Total Imports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	Rupees.	Rupees.	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India	1,03,01,670	1,22,14,220	43	50
Turkish Arabia	1,02,85,501	98,70,146	42	40
Muscat	1,09,800	1,84,161		
Zanzibar	16,700	56,200		
Trucial Oman	21,54,650	6,20,618		
Persia	13,80,494	18,02,644	15	10
Mukalla	25,265	43,475		
United States of America	..	1,20,000		
Germany and other countries visited by Hamburg-American Line steamers	..	1,44,900		
Total	2,48,01,519	2,45,56,392	100	100

Bunder Abbas.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Imports to Total Imports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India	291,666	197,182	75	56
France	10,872	41,246	2	11
Germany	14,197	28,549	3	8
Austria-Hungary	14,012	34,013	3	9
Russia	18,948	5,616	5	1
United States	12	90		
Turkey and Turkish Arabia	995	1,660		
China	12,508	7,462		
Belgium	3,070	4,144		
Japan	1,960	34		
Italy	6	882		
Java	8,951	7,163	15	15
Mauritius	3,810	4		
Egypt	1,493	24		
Sweden	695	4,022		
Switzerland	20	81		
Muscat	620	1,761		
Persian ports	16,276	21,782		
Other countries	851	462		
Total	399,099	354,933	100	100

BUSHIRE.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906-7.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	498,122	596,182	65	70
France	57,717	102,019	8	12
Austria-Hungary	30,831	67,113	4	8
Germany	26,264	25,459	3	3
Dutch East Indies	9,696	19,931	1	2
Turkey	51,517	11,799	7	1
China	13,396	9,899	2	1
Russia	33,981	7,488	5	1
Belgium, United States, &c. ..	40,108	23,052	5	2
Total	761,932	863,842	100	100

BUSSORAH.

[No statistics available.]

III.—TABLE showing the Total Value of British and Foreign Exports from the various Ports of the Persian Gulf in 1905–6.

BAHREIN.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	Rupees.	Rupees.	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	1,29,29,175	1,41,69,250	63	62
Turkish Arabia	62,69,881	75,47,142	31	33
Egypt	32,180			
Germany	72,000	1,00,450		
Muscat	58,327	55,680		
Zanzibar	27,335	39,008	6	5
Trucial Oman	4,84,443	3,45,606		
Persia	2,60,527	3,18,694		
France	3,16,765	1,87,000		
Total	2,04,50,643	2,27,62,810	100	100

BUNDER ABBAS.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	127,533	118,066	82	82
Russia	1,203	10,178	1	7
Turkey and Turkish Arabia ..	7,561	2,388	5	6
China	5	1,050		
Egypt	1,291	355		
Switzerland	407	125		
Arabia	5,846	490		
Muscat	1,039	561	12	6
Bahrein	2,250	1,163		
Hong Kong	5,467	..		
Arab Coast	781	2,579		
Persian ports	4,120	267		
Other countries	261	135		
Total	155,762	144,387	100	100

BUSHIRE.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	245,231	325,814	53	54
China	104,982	110,075	22	19
Turkey	40,704	43,818	9	7
Germany	10,505	24,228	2	4
Egypt	24,646	33,941	5	6
America	1,414	16,200		
Austria-Hungary	3	371		
Bahrein	14,064	12,604		
Russia	2,102	10,482	9	10
France	3,314	3,169		
Dutch East Indies	1,469	3,035		
Belgium	5	2,944		
Various	21,741	5,740		
Total	469,949	598,421	100	100

An interesting and exhaustive report was drawn up in November 1907 by Mr. Vice-Consul Chick of Bushire on the operations of the Hamburg-America Line in the Persian Gulf during the first year of their venture, and on the bearing of this venture on the prospects of British commerce. The report was accompanied by detailed statistics.

The main conclusions arrived at were as follows:—

The enterprise involved, on the admission of the master of one of the German vessels, a dead loss of 1,000*l.* every voyage, a statement confirmed by the annual report of the Company in Hamburg, thus affording substance to the contention that the service rested upon State aid. It was expected that the earnings of the second year would fall short of those of the first, as British firms had been aroused by competition to increased activity.

Statistics alone, however, hardly expressed the spirit of competition engendered by the visits of these steamers, for the monopoly of the service enjoyed by a single firm, Messrs. Wönckhaus, in fostering their own commercial development, coupled

with the keen interest taken in the success of the scheme by the German Government, had aroused an antagonistic feeling amongst the important British firms in the Gulf ports.

Uncertainty as to the ultimate aim of the new undertaking had kept the European mercantile communities in a state of somewhat nervous anticipation. Overtures by the Deutsche-Orient Bank of Hamburg to native British traders in Bunder Abbas, an ostentatious forward policy in Lingah, including the flying of the German flag over two native boats, the endeavour to inaugurate relations with the Arab coast, as well as financial operations in Bushire, and many rumours of other forms of enterprise had added to the perplexity with which the future of German identification with the politics and commerce of Persia was generally regarded.

Certain points were indicated in conclusion as deserving of attention, with a view to meeting the special forms of German competition:—

1. Reform in the local working of the Bank of Persia.
2. Lighterage from British steamers in British owned lighters.
3. Greater regularity in the sailings of British vessels from Persian waters.
4. Establishment of a British Company for transport over the great southern road.
5. More attention to export trade from Southern Persia viâ Bushire.
6. The forestalment of all German schemes of concessions in the valley of the Karun.
7. Close attention by those firms concerned to the tendencies of German development in the Gulf.
8. The pushing of British sugar and Indian indigo.

Action in regard to the first two points is being taken through the India Office and Board of Trade respectively. The further desiderata, excepting 4 and 6, might be dealt with by the Board of Trade. Point 4 would require careful consideration, and might perhaps be discussed with Messrs. Lynch. Point 6 is already likely to receive the attention of His Majesty's Legation, who have reported fully upon an irrigation project of a Dutch engineer on the Karun.

It is incidentally recommended in Mr. Chick's report that the Imperial Bank of Persia should open a branch at Bahrein. This course is open to objection, since it might lend colour to the contention that Bahrein is Persian territory. On this ground it would seem preferable to encourage the establishment of some bank not connected with Persia—say, the branch of a Bombay house.

(c.) *Lighthouses.** †

[Communicated by Mr. Lovat Fraser.]

The following notes are based on conversations with officers of the Navy and Indian Marine, and also with commanders of mail steamers of the British India Company; further, with political officers.

There are at present no lights in the Gulf at all, except a very small one (a beacon) at the southern point of Koweit Harbour.

There is a general consensus of opinion that a light is chiefly wanted on Ras Musandim, at the entrance to the Gulf. For manifest political reasons, this is also desirable. Such a light might be placed—(*a*) on one of the Quoin Islands; (*b*) on Musandim Island, the actual point, separated from the mainland; (*c*) on the mainland behind. All three places are lonely, the climate is bad, supplies would have to be brought from elsewhere, and perhaps there might at first be danger from the local fribesmen. The replies to these objections are that the location is not more lonely than the island lights in the Red Sea, the climate can hardly be worse than that, and supplies in the Red Sea are furnished from Suez. The Musandim light would be actually in sight of Bunder Abbas. I doubt the danger: steamers pass by daily, and there are our gun-boats. As to the relative sites, the Quoin Islands are low, and might be difficult of access. The Navy and Mercantile Marine favour Musandim Island; it would also be a little safer. On political grounds, the mainland is favoured.

* See also p. 91.

† A Report on Lights in the Persian Gulf was drawn up in 1872 by the Consulting Engineer for Kurrachee Harbour. (See India Office Library, No. 718.)

Mail steamers make Musandim at night going up; in the daytime coming down. No tramp steamer dares to approach Musandim at night. The nautical reasons why a light is very necessary are that it is often very thick and foggy at the entrance to the Gulf, where the water is very deep, and vessels cannot run into soundings.

Next, a light is badly needed on one of the islands between Lingah and Bushire. Alternative sites are (*a*) Ras Al Mutaf, (*b*) Sheikh Shuaib, (*c*) Keis, (*d*) Farur. Taking first Farur, it is 465 feet high, with a peculiar outline, having a small peak in the middle. Sailors say they can make it out in the thickest weather. Sheikh Shuaib and Ras Al Mutaf can generally be located by soundings. Opinion seems to be in favour of Keis, because it is a sufficient distance from Bushire, and because a good course can be shaped thence, up or down.

Thirdly, a light is required on Kubbar Island, south of Koweit, for making Koweit Harbour. The little beacon on the mainland at Ras Al Arz is very insufficient. All authorities, nautical and otherwise, are in favour of Kubbar Island, which is the property of the Sheikh of Koweit, and easily supplied.

As to Bahrein, there is an outer buoy, but it is difficult to make. Sailors would like to see this buoy replaced by a lightship. The landing is bad, and very shallow for a long distance. Captain Prideaux, the Political Agent, has worked out some sort of scheme by which it might be improved greatly at a moderate cost, I think by reclamation of part of the foreshore. This might be a cheap and useful method of creating additional interests. Bahrein trade is very promising, but better facilities are greatly needed. I think it was here that the "Viceroy of India" was stuck on a rock for an hour or two, an incident which passed unrecorded.

At the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab there is a buoy laid down by the British India Company, but it is difficult to pick up, almost impossible at night. It ought to be replaced by a lightship.

At Bushire there should be a light by the telegraph station.

Quite apart from political considerations, lights are badly needed in the Gulf. Navigation there is attended with great danger at night, especially since the speed of mail steamers has been accelerated.

(d.) *British Cables.*

[Communicated by the India Office.]

General.

In a despatch dated the 21st September, 1899, the Government of India wrote as follows:—

"During the last thirty years the maintenance of the submarine cables of the Indo-European Telegraph Department from Fao to Jask, and of the land-lines from that place to Karachi, has devolved upon the Indian Government, and has tended to increase an already preponderant influence over both the waters and the shores of this sea (*i.e.*, the Persian Gulf)."

The following are the dates on which the various lines between India and the head of the Persian Gulf were completed:—

Mekran Coast land-line from Karachi to Gwadur*	April 1863
Cable from Gwadur to Fao, viâ Cape Musandim and Bushire ..	April 8, 1864
[In January 1869 this cable was diverted from Cape Musandim to Jask, whence it ran viâ Henjam Island to Bushire and Fao.]	
Cable from Gwadur to Karachi	May 16, 1864
Land-line from Gwadur to Jask	Aug. 15, 1869
Second cable, running direct from Jask to Bushire, without touching at Henjam Island	Nov. 1869
Cable from Jask to Muscat	Nov. 25, 1901
Cable from Henjam Island to Bunder Abbas	Dec. 31, 1905
[This cable was constructed by the Indo-European Telegraph Department for the Persian Government, to whom it is to be transferred on repayment of the cost of construction. No repayment has yet been made.]	

* Gwadur, which lies some 50 miles on the British side of the Persian frontier in Mekran, is Muscat territory. British telegraphic rights there are covered by the Convention of 1865 with the Sultan of Muscat, quoted below in the section dealing with Muscat.

At the present time the Indo-European Telegraph Department maintains establishments at the following ports of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea lying outside British territory: Fao, Bushire, Henjam, Jask, Muscat, Chahbar, and Gwadur.* The submarine cable touches the coast at all these points with the exception of Chahbar, which is a station on the land-line from Jask to Karachi.

The staff employed by the Department at the various stations is as follows:—

	Higher Staff.	Menial Establishment.
Fao	5	7
Bushire	15	17
Henjam	2	5
Jask	10	14
Muscat	2	5
Gwadur	..	1
Chahbar	3	9
Total	37	53

According to information supplied in January 1905, the number of guards employed to protect telegraph stations in the Gulf were as follows:—

Reshire (Bushire)	12
Jask	52
Chahbar	..
Total	116

Rights acquired at different Stations.

1. *Fao.*—The rights of the British Government at Fao were defined in the Anglo-Turkish Convention of the 3rd September, 1861, "for the establishment of telegraphic communication between India and the Ottoman territory."

Clauses III–V of this Convention ran as follows:—

"III. His Majesty the Sultan authorizes the establishment on Ottoman territory, at the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, of a British telegraph office, with a staff, which shall not exceed in number fifty persons, placed under the exclusive orders of a British station-master, and which, as well as the apparatus and all the instruments requisite for working the submarine line, shall be at the expense of the British Government.

"IV. The aforesaid British office shall be located in the same building occupied by the Ottoman station at the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, with a view to facilitate the combined operations of the common service.

"The apparatus of the Ottoman service and that of the British service at that joint station shall be placed in separate compartments, but in close proximity to each other, and shall not be connected.

"The exchange of messages shall take place immediately on their receipt, the officers handing them to each other through a window, and the service of the British and Ottoman offices shall be permanent. The rent and cost of maintenance of the mixed telegraphic station shall be shared in equal proportions by the British and Ottoman Administrations.

"V. It is well understood that the active service of the British office on Ottoman territory shall be limited to the receipt and delivery by hand to the Ottoman office of the messages arriving from India by the submarine cable; to the transmission of those which are delivered to it by the Ottoman office; and, lastly, to the superintendence and maintenance of a safe and regular submarine communication between the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab and India.

"The Direction-in-Chief of the mixed station shall devolve on the Ottoman Administration, but without the right of interfering in the internal administration of the British office."

2. *Bushire.*—As regards our cable stations in Persian territory, the leading document is the Agreement made with the Persian Government in December 1862

* See note on previous page.

for the construction of a line of telegraph viâ Khanikin on the Turco-Persian frontier, through Tehran overland to Bushire, as an alternative to the line through Turkey to Fao, and thence by cable viâ Bushire to India. It was decided at the time not to make formal application for landing rights on Persian territory for the cable down the Gulf; but an understanding was arrived at with the Persian Government, in pursuance of which the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs sent the following instructions to the Governor of Bushire on the 18th May, 1863:—

"As you already know, by desire of His Majesty the Shah, the Persian Government are about to construct a telegraph line from the frontier of Kermanshah to Bushire, and the English Government, as they may feel disposed, are at liberty to join their telegraphic wires, which are to be brought by submarine line, to the Persian wires; it is therefore necessary that they should have a telegraph station on the coast, and His Majesty has ordered that a station should be erected for this purpose at Resheer,* under the directions of the Prince Ilizad-u-Sultaneh, which is to be given to the British Government for an annual rent. In the meantime, as the English cable may shortly reach Bushire, and on its arrival they may require a place at once in which to keep their stores and materials before the regular station is completed, you will now at once, after communicating with the Resident and ascertaining the exact spot where the cable will be landed, proceed to erect a building according to the accompanying plan given by the Prince in a suitable position, and get it in readiness, so that they may not suffer in convenience."

Jask.—Landing rights at Jask were held to be implied in Article II of the Anglo-Persian Convention of the 2nd April, 1868, in which provision was made, in view of the possibility of accident to the Gulf cable, for the "construction and efficient working of a line of telegraph between Gwadur and a point between Jask and Bunder Abbas." Article II of this Convention contained the provision that "the English Government will pay annually to the Persian Government the sum of 3,000 tomans for leave to lay down the line of telegraph on these coasts and places which are under the sovereignty of Persia."

The possession of land for a cable station at Jask was, moreover, set forth in the "Jask Agreement" of the 25th February, 1887, from which the following clause is quoted verbatim:—

"That the telegraph establishment, which is situated at a distance of 300 yards from the point, take possession of 600 yards more to the north of the telegraph establishment, *i.e.*, 400 yards from the present boundary fence, between which and the telegraph establishment is a distance of 200 yards, making a total from the end of the promontory to the limits of 900 yards; at the end of these 900 yards a wire boundary will be drawn, and the Government of Jask shall have no right whatsoever on any account whatever to interfere in the interior of those limits."

The Agreement also contained the following clauses:—

"It is agreed that if any of the defendants of Jask, other than the true, positive, and salaried servants of the telegraph establishment, in order to take sanctuary or protection, penetrate within the limits, the telegraph officials shall have no right to protect them; on the contrary, they should place them without their boundary, and hand them over to the Government of Jask.

"Any merchant, native or foreign, who may have shops within the limits must pay the usual customs dues on that which he imports in order to trade, buy, or sell."

Chahbar.—British rights at Chahbar are presumably covered by Article II of the 1863 Convention, by which, in return for an annual payment, the British Government obtained "leave to lay down the line of telegraph on these coasts and places which are under the sovereignty of Persia."

Henjam.—The telegraph station at Henjam was established in 1869, on the diversion of the cable from Cape Musandim; it was abandoned in 1881 and reoccupied in April 1904. As regards the ownership of the island, it should be observed that in 1868, when the question of a telegraph station had arisen, Colonel Pelly reported that in his opinion Henjam was a possession of Muscat; but the Government of India of

* Situated on the Bushire peninsula, some 6 miles south of the town (Curzon's "Persia," vol. ii, p. 235).

the day elected to proceed in their negotiations for a telegraph station on the assumption that the island belonged to Persia. The Concession granted to the British Government in 1868 was embodied in the following Minute by the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated the 29th March, 1868:—

"With respect to permission for the cable telegraph station on the island of Angaum (Henjam), the number of persons to be employed, and the extent of accommodation to be provided on the said island in accordance with the Memorandum dated the 14th March, and the plans forwarded to the Persian Foreign Office on the 28th of the same month, after being approved by the British Mission, the Persian Ministers, in order to strengthen the friendly relations between the two Governments, will give permission and authority in the manner indicated, provided that the number of employés and extent of the buildings are not allowed at any time to exceed those explained in the Memorandum received from the British Legation."

When our telegraph station was re-established in 1904, in connection with the scheme for establishing telegraphic communication with Bunder Abbas, Sir A. Hardinge informed the Persian Government that "there is no intention on the part of the Government of India to support any such claim (*i.e.*, to Henjam) of the Chief of Dubai [whose subjects the local Arabs claimed to be], or to repudiate the authority of the Persian Government." The Persian Government, however, chose to assert their authority by sending a Customs officer to the island, much to the resentment of the local Arabs. A controversy arose with the Persian Government as to the limits to be assigned to our telegraph station and as to the position of a Persian Customs office on the island. The dispute still remains unsettled.

Bunder Abbas.—As has already been stated, the Convention of the 2nd April, 1868, empowered the British Government to "make arrangements with regard to the construction and efficient working of a line of telegraph between Gwadur and a point between Jask and Bunder Abbas." The question of bringing Bunder Abbas into telegraphic connection with the outer world was definitely raised in 1901. In their despatch of the 21st January, 1901, Lord Curzon's Government stated that when the Viceroy was at Bunder Abbas, during his visit to the Persian Gulf, "he was earnestly pressed both by the local traders and also by the Salar-i-Moazzam, Governor of the Gulf ports, to lend his assistance to the connection of Bunder Abbas by telegraph with the outer world"; and it was accordingly anticipated that the proposal would prove acceptable to the Persian Government. Difficulty was, however, encountered, and, in view of the obstructive attitude of the Persian Government, the cable was carried back to Henjam under the authority of the Concession of 1868.

Subsequently, this reconnection with Henjam being a *fait accompli*, an Agreement was signed on the 13th May, 1905, by Sir A. Hardinge and the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs for the construction of "a line of telegraph to connect the Indo-European telegraph station at Henjam with Bunder Abbas across Kishm." The line was to belong to the Persian Government, but the Indo-European Telegraph Departments were "to provide the engineers and materials necessary for the construction." In the second paragraph of this Agreement it was provided that, "as soon as the line is complete, and the cost of materials and charges of the engineers and telegraph ship have been paid, the line shall be handed over to the Persian Ministry of Telegraphs." The charges to be incurred were not to exceed 75,000 rupees, the payment of which sum was guaranteed by the Persian Government. It should be added that the Persian Government has not yet paid back the cost of construction, and the line has, in consequence, not yet been handed over. The cable house at Bunder Abbas is in charge of an employé of the British Consulate who receives an allowance from the Indo-European Telegraph Department, but the site of the proposed telegraph office has not yet been settled, the question, like that of the station on Henjam Island, having formed the subject of a prolonged controversy with the Persian Government.

Muscat.—The cable from Jask to Muscat was completed in 1901, in accordance with an Agreement concluded with the Sultan of Muscat in 1865, stipulating that "the British Government shall be at liberty to construct one or more telegraphic lines, and to erect telegraph stations in any portion of territory subject to the sovereignty of His Highness, both in Arabia and Mekran, which shall be most convenient to them." The Sultan of Muscat also agreed to "afford protection to the best of his ability to the lines

of telegraph, the telegraph stations, and the persons employed in their construction and maintenance."

British Rights at former Telegraph Stations in the Gulf.

Telegraph Island.—Telegraph Island, which lies in Elphinstone Inlet, off the Musandim promontory, was occupied in 1864 "without reference either to the Sultan of Muscat or to any other authority" (Minute by Lord Curzon, dated the 6th October, 1902, forming an inclosure to the Government of India's despatch of the 23rd October, 1902), for the purpose of erecting a station on the Gulf cable. The station was abandoned in 1869, when the cable was diverted from Musandim to Jask and Henjam. Since that date the island has not been occupied by us in any way.

The question of our status on Telegraph Island, which appears to be little more than a rock, arose in 1904 in connection with the proposals for selecting naval bases in the Gulf, which were the outcome of Lord Curzon's visit to those regions.

On the 24th August, 1904, His Majesty's Government sanctioned a proposal of the Government of India to erect flagstaffs on three points at Cape Musandim, of which the site of the old buildings on Telegraph Island was one. The flagstaffs were erected, but as a result of representations by the Admiralty, it was subsequently decided that two out of the three should be abandoned. It was recognized that Telegraph Island, in view of its occupation from 1864–9, stood in a different position from the other sites selected, and the orders of His Majesty's Government conveyed in Mr. Brodrick's telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 31st March, 1905, approved the maintenance of the flagstaff on Telegraph Island "as a sign of the continuance of our occupation of the spot, which first took place in connection with the operations of the Eastern Telegraph Company." In a despatch dated the 19th May, 1905, the Government of India were requested to reconsider the question of maintaining the flagstaff. They were informed that "the opinion of His Majesty's Government with regard to the flagstaff on Telegraph Island was based on the conclusion," formulated in the Government of India's letter of the 23rd October, 1902, "that the jurisdiction of the Sultan of Muscat over the Makhlab Isthmus and Musandim promontory was of so uncertain and ineffective a character that it would be open to His Majesty's Government to ignore it;" recent local inquiries had materially affected this view of the Sultan's position, and it was therefore requested that the Government of India "will again take the question into consideration in the light of the further information now in your possession," and would inform His Majesty's Government of their conclusions. It may be added that, apart from Captain Lorimer's "local inquiries," which were alluded to in the despatch, the circumstances had been further modified, inasmuch as the British "Counter-Case" in The Hague Arbitration regarding Muscat had admitted the sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat in the Musandim promontory.

On the 26th September, 1907, the Government of India recommended that no further action should be taken in the matter, beyond leaving the flagstaff on Telegraph Island where it is, and this proposal is now under the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

Part IV.—Conclusion.

Mr. T. J. Bennett's paper (verbatim extracts). Lieutenant Low's "History of the Indian Marine." Sir J. Malcolm's "History Persia."

The political connection of England with the Persian Gulf may be said to begin with the defeat of the Portuguese at Hormuz. The Council at Surat came to an agreement with Shah Abbas, and dispatched a fleet consisting of five ships, which co-operated with the Persians in reducing Hormuz and compelling the Portuguese to take refuge in Muscat. Their power had been rudely shaken by their expulsion from Gombroon, the modern Bunder Abbas, which had become an important trading station on the main land opposite Hormuz; this was followed by their expulsion in 1622 from Hormuz itself.

From this time the influence of the English was steadily consolidated. On condition that they maintained two ships of war in the Gulf to safeguard navigation they were to receive half the customs of Bunder Abbas, and their goods were to be admitted duty free into that port. Their position was, indeed, so far from being an exclusive one, that a French and a Dutch factory were established there before the end of the reign of Shah Abbas, who died in 1628. But it is clear, nevertheless, that as

time went on the English did acquire an exceptional *status* in the Gulf, and that at a very early period in the history of the English connection with these waters there may be found the germ of the larger responsibility and influence which this country was afterwards to assume there. The Persians, who at all periods of their history abhorred and dreaded the sea, were glad to secure an undertaking from the East India Company at the time of the expulsion of the Portuguese from Hormuz, to maintain two ships in the Gulf to protect trade, and six years later the Surat Council went in excess of this stipulation in sending five vessels to revive and increase the trade with Persia, and carry on naval operations against the Portuguese.

The rivalry of the Dutch soon became as embarrassing as that of the Portuguese had been. They sent eight ships to Bussorah, where the English had opened trade in 1615, and almost ruined the factory there; at Bunder Abbas they proved such bad neighbours that the Company were forced to remove the bulk of their property to Bussorah, and though the factory was retained until 1761, for the last century of its existence it was the seat of a very insignificant business.

The closing of the establishment at Bunder Abbas was almost immediately followed by the opening of a factory at Bushire, which has since become the political and commercial head-quarters of the British in the Gulf. The Firman of Karim Khan, under which the Bushire factory was established in 1763, was granted to one Price, as "Governor-General for the English nation in the Gulf of Persia," and to a certain Benjamin Jervis, Resident, in response to a demand for "a grant of their ancient privileges in these kingdoms." It concedes not only an unbounded, but a virtually exclusive, liberty of trade to the English. A site for a factory, as well as a garden and burial ground, was granted. The servants of the English were to be exempt from the local jurisdiction, and the English were to hoist their own colours, as they had been allowed to do at Bunder Abbas, and to have twenty-one guns for saluting. Taken in connection with a new Firman, granted in 1788 by Karim Khan's nephew, who expressed his desire that the English merchants should "sleep in the cradle of security and confidence," it shows that towards the end of the eighteenth century England had attained a position in the Gulf to which none of her competitors could lay claim.

The service that Great Britain rendered to humanity by preserving the peace of the Gulf during the nineteenth century has already been indicated. It found formal embodiment in the maritime truce at first imposed upon the warring Chiefs on the coast in 1835, renewed from time to time, and made perpetual in 1853. In her efforts to put down the Slave Trade Great Britain had no help from any other Power. How extensive it was may be gathered from the fact that in the early thirties the annual imports of slaves into Kurrachee alone amounted to between 700 and 800. The work of policing the Gulf may be less arduous than it was in old days, but the spirit of piracy is latent, and a break in the continuity of British vigilance would be followed by a return of the old disorders. The beneficial effects of our past policy in this regard are frequently seen in the manumission at the Consulate of Muscat of slaves claiming their freedom under Sir Bartle Frere's Treaty of 1873. *In one other noteworthy respect Great Britain has contributed in a very substantial degree to the peace of the Gulf and the countries adjacent—in the help which the British authorities, political and naval, have given in the repression of the Arms Traffic.

The predominant position which Great Britain has gradually acquired, and the policy evolved from the rights and obligations upon which that predominant position rests, are forcibly demonstrated in a series of official despatches and public statements included in the records of the past half century. From these a selection of three has been made, viz., an extract from a despatch from the Government of India, written in 1870 and entirely approved by the Duke of Argyll as Secretary of State for India; a declaration made by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords in 1903; and a despatch from Sir E. Grey to His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh, dated August 1907.

I.

"Apart from the positive engagements which we have contracted with the Arab Chiefs, and from which it is neither possible nor desirable that we should recede, the present is not a time when we can encourage the revival of old and

* The subject of "Quarantine" is dealt with in a separate Memorandum.

unfounded claims such as those which Persia now puts forward [to Bahrein]. During the years of peace that have followed the establishment of our supremacy in the Persian Gulf, trade has enormously increased, and the predatory Arabs have embarked in peaceful and mercantile pursuits on the faith of the security which our protectorate affords. British steamers now ply weekly from one end of the Gulf to the other, and our subjects have embarked large capital in the pearl fisheries on the coast and in the commerce of Mesopotamia, Persia, and Arabia. Every day the importance of the Gulf as a commercial highway between Europe and the East is increasing. Even if the political engagements which we have contracted admitted of such a course, and Persia were possessed of an adequate naval force, it would be almost impossible and certainly impolitic to commit to her the guardianship of these vast and varied interests. Any indication on our part even of a desire to do so would probably be followed by the decline of trade, the outbreak of hostilities, piracy, and plunder, and a return to the disorder and lawlessness which during the last half century we have so successfully restrained."

II.

"The noble Lord asked me for a statement of our policy with regard to the Persian Gulf. I think I can give him one in a few simple words. It seems to me that our policy should be directed, in the first place, to protect and promote British trade in those waters. In the next place, I do not think that he suggests, or that we should suggest, that those efforts should be directed towards the exclusion of the legitimate trade of other Powers. In the third place—I say it without hesitation—we should regard the establishment of a naval base, or of a fortified port, in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal. I say that in no minatory spirit, because, so far as I am aware, no proposals are on foot for the establishment of a foreign naval base in the Persian Gulf. I at least have heard of none; and I cannot help thinking that the noble Lord waxed almost unnecessarily warm at the idea of such a foreign intrusion, with which, so far as I am aware, we are not at present threatened. Well, the noble Lord then touched upon a series of points connected with our commercial interests in the Gulf. It is impossible, to my mind, to dissociate our commercial and our political interests."

III.

"I have to-day authorized your Excellency by telegraph to sign a Convention with the Russian Government containing Arrangements on the subject of Persia, Afghanistan, and Thibet.

"The Arrangement respecting Persia is limited to the regions of that country touching the respective frontiers of Great Britain and Russia in Asia, and the Persian Gulf is not part of those regions, and is only partly in Persian territory. It has not therefore been considered appropriate to introduce into the Convention a positive declaration respecting special interests possessed by Great Britain in the Gulf, the result of British action in those waters for more than a hundred years.

"His Majesty's Government have reason to believe that this question will not give rise to difficulties between the two Governments should developments arise which make further discussion affecting British interests in the Gulf necessary. For the Russian Government have in the course of the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of this Arrangement explicitly stated that they do not deny the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf—a statement of which His Majesty's Government have formally taken note.

"In order to make it quite clear that the present Arrangement is not intended to affect the position in the Gulf, and does not imply any change of policy respecting it on the part of Great Britain, His Majesty's Government think it desirable to draw attention to previous declarations of British policy, and to reaffirm generally previous statements as to British interests in the Persian Gulf and the importance of maintaining them.

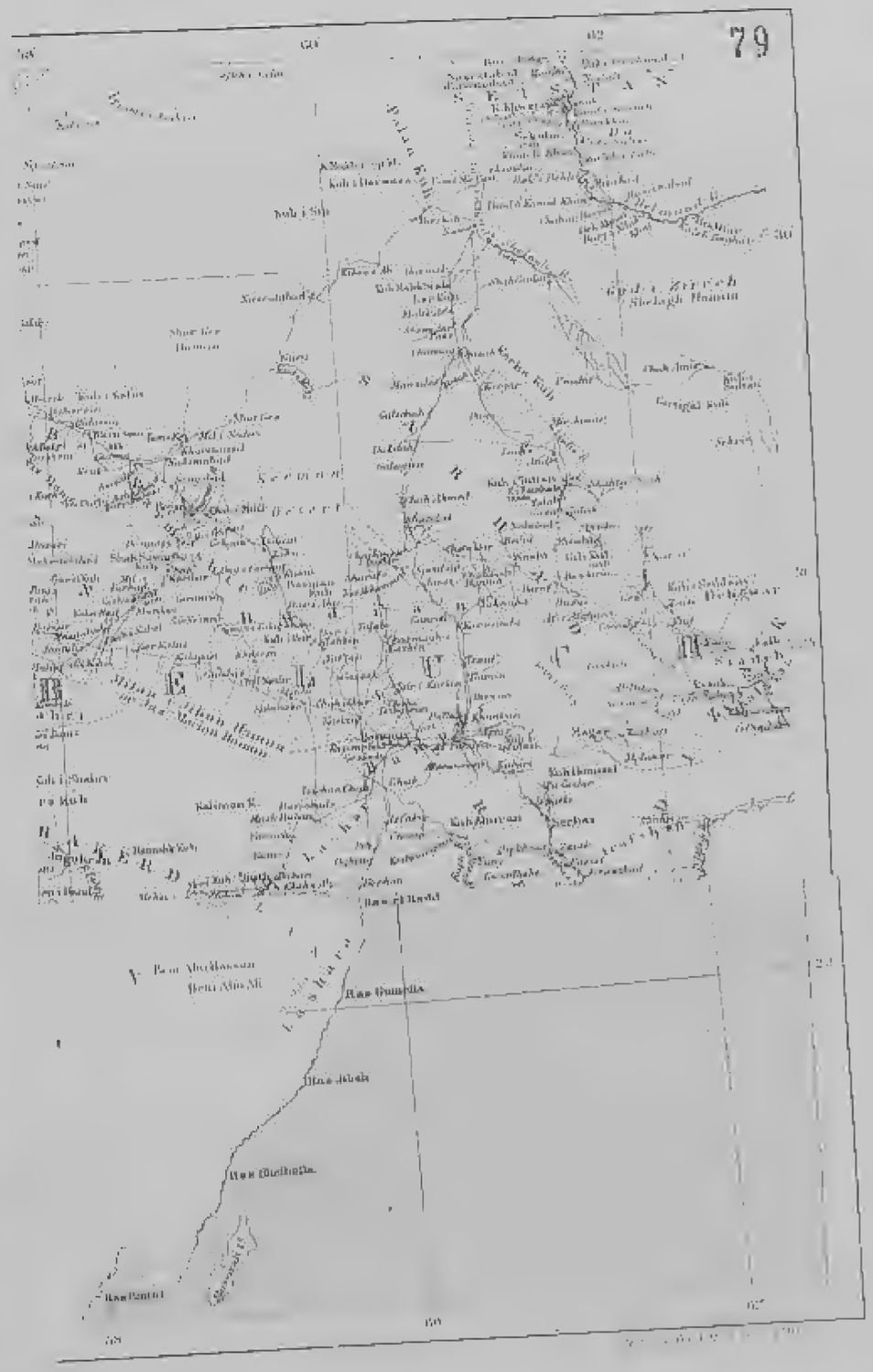
"His Majesty's Government will continue to direct all their efforts to the preservation of the *status quo* in the Gulf and the maintenance of British trade; in doing so, they have no desire to exclude the legitimate trade of any other Power."

It is abundantly clear from the passages quoted that the vital issues involved in the maintenance of British predominance in the Persian Gulf are appreciated; but, none the less, the recent activity of the Germans in pushing their interests in these regions has been so marked that there is reason, under existing conditions, to fear a serious diminution of our influence—first commercial, but eventually political; and this process cannot but be accelerated if the Bagdad Railway is completed under German auspices alone. It would seem, accordingly, that the moment has arrived when a policy of constructive action might advantageously be substituted for one which is defensive in character, and practically limited to a declaration, *urbi et orbi*, that His Majesty's Government will resist by force any attempt to establish a fortified base in the Persian Gulf—a consummation which is scarcely likely to arise, and which, since the destruction of the Russian fleet and the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention, has passed outside the range of practical diplomacy.

Lord Lansdowne's declaration of May 1903 was made primarily as a warning to Russia, who was then suspected of harbouring designs upon Charbar. It was also intended, though this contingency was considered less likely to arise, to prevent the construction of a fortified terminus of the Bagdad Railway. It is, however, practically certain that the Germans will not stir up a hornet's nest by doing precisely what His Majesty's Government are publicly pledged to resist. A policy of gradual commercial absorption has far more to commend it, while, on the other hand, it cannot give rise to legitimate protests on the part of His Majesty's Government. But the whole history of the Persian Gulf, whether in the time of the Portuguese, the Dutch, or the English, has shown that commercial prosperity inevitably leads to political hegemony, and in these circumstances it is matter for grave consideration whether, on political grounds, exceptional measures should not be taken to facilitate British enterprise in the Persian Gulf, and to neutralize the efforts being made to undermine our existing position.

It is to draw attention to these measures that the present Memorandum has been drawn up, and, even if the precise proposals which have been indicated do not meet with approval, it may confidently be said that some change of policy will be called for to meet the exigencies of an altered situation, and that opportunities should be seized or created in order to consolidate our position, and to turn to advantage by timely action the few years which may remain before the advent of the Bagdad Railway.

Foreign Office,
February 12, 1908.



SKETCH MAP
OF THE
PERSIAN GULF & ARABIAN COAST
Scale 1/1,000,000 or 1 Inch to 60 Miles
GULF OF OMAN
ARABIAN SEA
Ras Tanura
Heur Malub

SKETCH MAP
PERSIAN GULF & ARABIAN COAST
LARISTAN
BELUCH
MEKR
GULF OF OMAN
ARABIAN SEA
Sukra Bay
Ras Madraka
Ras Shashaba
Ras Sir
Ras Gorak
Dubbra
Ras Mubah

RUSSIA

CASPIAN SEA

TURK

TURKISH EMPIRE

PERSIA

KHORASAN

MAZANDARAN

ASTRABAD

TEHERAN

KOMISHAH

YEZDIKHAST

KERMAN

LARISTAN

MAKRAN

GULF of OMAN

REFERENCE

RUSSIAN TURKISTAN
CHINESE TURKISTAN
AFGHANISTAN
BALTISTAN OR LITTLE TIBET
KASHMIR
INDIA
PUNJAB
RAJPUTANA
Kabul
Kandahar
Quetta
Peshawar
Jellalabad
Ghazni
Herat
Khiva
Bokhara
Samarkand
Tashkend
Kashgar
Yarkand
Khotan
Leh
Srinagar
Jeypur
Delhi
Agra
Lahore
Multan
Bahawalpur
Jodhpur
Ajmere
Jeypur
Indus R.
Oxus R.
Jaxartes R.
Helmund R.
Cabul R.
Sutlej R.
Jhelum R.
Chenab R.
Ravee R.
Bolan Pass
Khyber Pass
Kurrum Pass
Gomal Pass
Khojuk Pass
Shutargardan Pass
Karakorum Pass
Kara Kul
Yarkand R.
Kashgar R.
Khotan R.
Shyok R.
Nubra R.
Indus R.
Gilgit R.
Hunza
Nagar
Punch
Rajour
Kurrachee
Hyderabad
Jeysulmere
Bhawulpore
Mooltan
Shikarpore
Sukkur
Khelat
Sibi
Pishin
Candahar
Ghuznee
Cabul
Jellalabad
Peshawur
Attock
Rawul Pindee
Jhelum
Lahore
Umritsir
Loodiana
Ferozepore
Bhutteanah
Hansi
Hissar
Rohtuck
Delhi
Meerut
Agra
Muttra
Alwar
Jeypur
Ajmere
Jodhpur
Bikanir
Jeysulmere
Bhawulpore
Mooltan
Jhung
Shorkote
Leia
Dera Ismail Khan
Bunnoo
Kohat
Kohat Pass
Peshawur
Attock
Rawul Pindee
Jhelum
Gujrat
Wuzeerabad

APPENDIX (A).

(By Mr. E. Parkes.)

(I.) *British Declarations to the Persian Government respecting their Claim to Sovereignty over Bahrein.*

IN 1822 a Convention was concluded between Captain Bruce, then Resident of the East India Company in the Persian Gulf, and the Vizier of the Prince Governor of Fars, admitting the right of Persia to Bahrein. This Convention was never ratified, but, on the contrary, the arrangement was entirely disavowed by the Government of Bombay, who, as a public mark of their disapprobation, removed Captain Bruce from his post.

1822.
Mr. E. Hertslet's Memorandum, March 23, 1874, p. 7.

2. The India Office have stated that, in 1825, the Persians laid claim to the sovereignty of Bahrein, and that the British Government refused to recognize the claim.

1825.
India Office letter, April 20, 1863.

3. Sheikh Abdulla of Bahrein was, in consequence of family dissensions, driven out of the island, and sought to enlist the sympathy of Persia. It was reported to Her Majesty's Government, in 1844, that the Persian Government intended to take part in the disputes. The Persian Prime Minister was consequently informed that, unless Persia could show a clear and indisputable right to the sovereignty of Bahrein, she must be prepared to encounter, in any scheme of the kind, the active opposition of the British Government. To support further representations, arguments were supplied to Colonel Sheil showing generally the grounds on which Her Majesty's Government were unable to recognize as valid the claims advanced by Persia to the sovereignty of Bahrein.

1844.
To Colonel Sheil, No. 23, August 21, 1844.

Mr. E. Hertslet's Memorandum, March 23, 1874, p. 8.

4. In February 1848, the Persian Government objected to British interference in the affairs of Bahrein, but were informed that the British Government could not recognize as valid the claims advanced by Persia to the sovereignty of the island.

1848.
Colonel Farrant, No. 11, May 2, 1848.

5. An understanding was arrived at, in 1861, between the Government of India and the India and Foreign Offices, that Bahrein should be regarded as independent and as subject neither to Turkey nor Persia. Subsequently a Treaty was concluded with the Sheikh (as an independent Ruler) for the suppression of piracy, and Her Majesty's Government refused to concur in a proposal made by the Shah that the sovereignty of Bahrein should be transferred to the Persian Crown.

1861.
To India Office, February 12, 1861.
Précis of inclosures in India Office letter of March 23, 1870.

6. In 1862 the Persian Envoy at Paris complained of the seizure, by British authorities, of a vessel belonging to the Sheikh of Bahrein. Lord Cowley informed him that Her Majesty's Government could not recognize any claim on the part of Persia to question their proceedings in regard to Bahrein.

1862.
To Lord Cowley, No. 209, February 22, 1862.

7. In reply to a complaint made respecting the proceedings at Bahrein of the British Resident, the Persian Minister in London was informed, on the 5th March, 1869, that the Sheikh of Bahrein was an independent Chief, with whom the British Government had Treaty engagements, and whom they must hold strictly to the performance of those engagements.

1869.
To General Mohsin Khan, March 5, 1869.

8. In the course of negotiations relative to the status of Bahreinese in Persia, the British Chargé d'Affaires was instructed, in February 1906, to inform the Persian Government that His Majesty's Government had never admitted ownership or sovereignty of Persia over Bahrein, and such a claim was wholly inadmissible. He was further to state that His Majesty's Government considered the island and its inhabitants to be under British protection, and must decline to entertain any further representations on the subject.

1906
To Mr. Grant Duff, February 9, 1906.
Mr. Grant Duff, No. 51, February 27, 1906.

9. In 1907 the Persian claim to the sovereignty of Bahrein was again urged, on the ground that it had been acknowledged in the Agreement made in 1822 by Captain Bruce. The British Minister at Tehran reminded the Persian Grand Vizier that this Treaty had been expressly disavowed by the British Government, and that Captain Bruce had been recalled.

1907.
Sir C. Spring-Rice, No. 3, January 3, 1907.

Sir C. Spring-Rice added, in a later note to the Grand Vizier, that the Shah himself had refused to recognize the stipulations of the Treaty, which had never been ratified.

Sir C. Spring-Rice, No. 61 March 27, 1907.

(2.) *British Declarations to the Ottoman Government respecting their Claim to Sovereignty over Bahrein.*

1839.

Mr. E. Hertslet's Memorandum, March 23, 1874, p. 5.

In 1839, on the occasion of the irruption of the Egyptian Army into Nejd, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf informed the agent of the Egyptian Commander that the British Government could not admit any claim of the Pasha (*i.e.*, Egypt and Turkey) upon Bahrein.

1851.

To Sir Stratford Canning, No. 40, February 12, 1851.

2. In 1851 the Sheikh of Bahrein was reported to be desirous of placing himself under Turkish protection. Sir Stratford Canning was thereupon instructed to inform the Turkish Ministers that Her Majesty's Government could not acknowledge nor acquiesce in any such arrangement, seeing that the Government of British India had had relations with Bahrein as an independent State, and had concluded with it certain Treaties. He was, moreover, to inform them that the British Government must object to any arrangement which would transfer Bahrein to the dominion or protectorship of any other Power.

1870.

3. In January 1870, the Turkish Ambassador in London communicated to the Foreign Office a telegram from the Porte, asking for an explanation of the proceedings at Bahrein of the British Resident. In this telegram Bahrein was referred to in the following terms: "L'Ile de Bahrein n'ayant jamais cessé, que nous sachions, de faire partie des possessions Ottomanes." Upon this, the British Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed "to explain courteously to the Porte that the British Government could not recognize its claim to the sovereignty of Bahrein, with regard to which a similar decision was pronounced by Lord Palmerston in his despatch of the 12th February, 1851."

To Mr. Barron, No. 19, February 8, 1870; and from ditto, No. 21, February 10, 1870.

1874.

To Musurus Pasha, April 14, 1871.

4. In 1874, in reference to a claim made by the Porte to enforce conscription against natives of Bahrein resident in Bussorah, the Turkish Ambassador was referred to the communications of 1851 and 1870, distinctly stating that Her Majesty's Government did not admit the claim of Turkey to consider Bahrein as a part of the Ottoman dominions, and that, if natives of that island applied to British Consuls in Turkey for protection, the latter could not refuse their good offices on behalf of such persons.

1874.

Sir H. Elliot, No. 9, January 8, 1875.

5. In 1874 a piratical attack was made upon Bahrein by the Beni Hajir tribe, instigated by Nazir-bin-Mobarik and other Bahrein exiles, who signed a Petition claiming the protection of the Turkish Government. A Memorandum on this subject was handed to the Porte by the British Ambassador, in which it was stated that the British Government could not recognize any rights or pretensions of the Porte over the island.

1875.

Sir H. Elliot, No. 657, October 12, 1875.

6. At the end of 1875 the British Ambassador at Constantinople spoke to the Turkish Minister, Safvet Bey, about the supposed intention of the Porte to cause a lighthouse to be erected at Bahrein, and pointed out to him that Her Majesty's Government would not allow the independence of Bahrein to be interfered with from any quarter, and that any claim on the part of the Porte to sovereignty over Bahrein would not be acquiesced in by them.

1876.

Sir H. Elliot, No. 371, April 12, 1876.

7. In 1876 steps were taken by the Governor of Bussorah to enforce the claims of El Katr merchants against Bahreinese. Sir H. Elliot addressed a note to the Turkish Government on the subject, reminding them of the determination of Her Majesty's Government to protect Bahrein against any attack upon its independence.

1879.

Sir A. Layard, No. 750, August 21, 1879.

8. In 1879 the British Ambassador made representations to the Porte respecting the imposition, by the Turkish authorities at Bussorah, of double taxes on vessels arriving from Bahrein and Muscat on the ground that those places were Turkish ports. He reminded the Porte that His Majesty's Government had never recognized the ports as belonging to Turkey, and protested against the assumption that they were Turkish ports.

1888.

Sir W. White, No. 112, March 15, 1888.

To Sir W. White, No. 121, April 17, 1888.

9. The Turkish claim to jurisdiction over Bahrein was renewed in 1888, and the Ottoman Government were consequently informed that any attempt to effect a landing at Bahrein would be opposed by force. They were also informed that any claim of the Porte to jurisdiction over the Chief of Bahrein could not be admitted, as Her Majesty's Government regarded him as an independent Ruler, with whom they were in Treaty relations.

1892.

Sir Clare Ford, No. 318, November 15, 1892.

10. A question arose in 1892 of the British protection of Bahreinese at Bussorah. Acting upon instructions, the British Ambassador at Constantinople addressed a note to the Porte, stating that, as Bahrein was under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen of England, no interference by the Ottoman authorities with natives of that island could be admitted.

1892.

Sir Clare Ford, No. 110 (Telegraphic), December 11, 1892.

11. In the same year (1892) a landing of Turkish troops in the island was apprehended, and the Porte was accordingly informed that such action would be opposed by British ships of war.

1893.

Sir Clare Ford, No. 160, May 11, 1893.

12. A further communication was made to the Porte in 1893 on the subject of British protection of Bahreinese. This pointed out that the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to recognize the sovereignty of the Sultan over the island had been consistent and undoubted. It went on to say that, having regard to the engagements towards the Chief of Bahrein undertaken by Her Majesty's Government, they must continue to maintain the right of their Diplomatic and Consular Officers in the Ottoman

Empire to give their good offices to any native of Bahrein who might have occasion to apply to them in respect of their dealings with Turkish authorities.

The British Ambassador, speaking subsequently to the Grand Vizier on the same subject, stated that, by virtue of the Convention of 1861, the Sheikh of Bahrein must be regarded as entirely independent of Turkish sovereignty.

Sir Clare Ford, No. 557, November 19, 1893.

In a further despatch, Sir Clare Ford reported that he had informed the Grand Vizier that the claim of the Porte to treat Bahreinese as Turkish subjects when in Ottoman territory was inadmissible by Her Majesty's Government, who would extend their protection to natives of Bahrein whenever occasion called for it.

Sir Clare Ford, No. 598, December 26, 1893.

1895.

13. It being the reported intention of the Al-bin-Ali tribe to form a settlement at Zobara, with the support of the Turkish Mutessarif of Hasa, the British Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed, in May 1895, to inform the Porte that the formation of such a settlement would constitute a menace to Bahrein. He was also instructed to state that, if the project were proceeded with, the Government of India would be compelled to take measures for the protection of the Chief of that island.

To Sir P. Currie, No. 200, May 30, 1895; and from ditto, No. 401, June 2, 1895.

Later in the year, in the course of a further remonstrance addressed to the Porte respecting the action of Turkish officials on the El Katr coast, the statement was reiterated that all Turkish claims to Bahrein, which was under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen of England, were totally inadmissible.

Sir P. Currie, No. 520, August 12, 1895.

1895.

A Memorandum on this subject was communicated to the Turkish Ambassador on the 23rd August, 1895. It was stated therein that Her Majesty's Government did not admit that this part of the coast was under Turkish jurisdiction, but that Bahrein was under British protection, and Her Majesty's Government could not allow any interference with or attack upon it.

To Rustem Pasha, August 23, 1895.

In a further Memorandum, communicated to the Turkish Ambassador in the following year, it was re-stated that Bahrein was under British protection, and that the Turkish claim to jurisdiction over that portion of the coast of the Persian Gulf in which Zobara was situated could not be admitted.

To Anthopoulos Pasha, December 5, 1896.

1896.

14. In February 1896 a *note verbale* was addressed to the Porte by the British Ambassador, requesting the issue of instructions to the Vali of Bussorah to admit the right of the British Consul to intervene on behalf of Bahrein subjects. The note reminded the Porte that the Chief of Bahrein was under the protection of the Queen of England, and it was, therefore, quite inadmissible that the natives of Bahrein should, when on Ottoman territory, be treated as Turkish subjects.

Sir P. Currie, No. 141, February 19, 1896.

1905.

15. Attention was called by the Porte in 1905 to the measures taken against Bahreinese for the ill-treatment of a German subject. Lord Lansdowne informed the Turkish Ambassador, in reply to his representations on the subject, that it was a matter of common knowledge, and well known to the Turkish Government, that His Majesty's Government had direct relations with the Sheikh of Bahrein, and that the island and its natives were under British protection. He went on to say that His Majesty's Government were within their rights in taking measures to obtain redress for the outrage committed there.

1905.

To Mr. Townley, No. 50, February 22, 1905.

This statement was repeated later in the year to the Turkish Ambassador, when he was informed that His Majesty's Government must decline to entertain any further representations from the Turkish Government on the subject.

To Musurus Pasha, May 20, 1905.

(3.) *Turkish Declarations.*

1871.

At an interview, on the 25th April, 1871, between M. Pisani (chief Dragoman to the British Embassy) and the Grand Vizier (Aali Pasha), in reference to a contemplated Turkish Expedition to Nejd, Aali Pasha said the British Ambassador might give the most positive assurances to Her Majesty's Government that the Porte entertained no intention whatever of obtaining the supremacy over Bahrein.

Sir H. Elliot, No. 171, April 26, 1871.

1871.

On the 10th December, 1871, an assurance was given, in reference to the Nejd Expedition, by Server Pasha, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, to M. Pisani (first Dragoman of the British Embassy), to the effect that the Sublime Porte had no intention of attacking or obtaining any supremacy over the independent tribes on the coast of the Persian Gulf.

Sir H. Elliot, No. 122, December 10, 1871.

APPENDIX (B).

Persian Undertakings respecting British Railway Construction in Persia.

BY the Russo-Persian Agreement of the 11th November, 1890, the Persian Government engaged that no railways should be constructed in Persia for ten years, on the termination of which period "the renewal of the Arrangement shall be immediately discussed between the two parties." The term of this engagement is understood to have been since prolonged up to 1910, but the Persian Grand Vizier informed the British Chargé d'Affaires in 1902 that he had intimated to Count Lamsdorff that "Persia would not agree to a further renewal of the Railway Agreement with Russia, which would terminate in 1910."

On the 16th September, 1888, the then Shah (Nasir-ud-din), in an autograph rescript to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave assurances as to British preferential rights in regard to railway construction in Southern Persia in the following terms:—

"Convey these commands to his Excellency the [British] Minister Plenipotentiary. Even give him this very autograph in order that he may keep it and be satisfied that our former promise with regard to the priority of the English Government over others in the construction of a southern railway to Tehran continues to hold good; and certainly, whenever Railway Concessions in the north, &c., are given to others immediately a Concession for a railway from Tehran to Shuster or such a line will be given to the English Company; and, of course, then the clauses and conditions will also be examined in order that it be to our advantage and interest and for the benefit of the commerce of both parties; and positively no southern railway without consultation with the English Government will be granted to any foreign country.

"P.S.—And it is clear that in Persia nobody will be granted permission to construct railways, except it be solely commercial lines. We say so now that they may know it."

On the 4th April, 1900, the British Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran was instructed to remind the Persian Government of this engagement, and to "make sure that the Shah, i.e., Nasir-ud-din's successor, the late Muzaffar-ud-din Shah," was aware of its "existence." Mr. Spring-Rice accordingly communicated a copy of the rescript of 1888 in an official note to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting that it might be laid before the Shah. Both the Grand Vizier, to whom a second copy of the communication was given; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs promised that this should be done at once and Mr. Spring-Rice subsequently learnt from the Shah's doctor that the matter had been explained to His Majesty, and that the latter had seen the document. On the 11th April, 1900, the British Chargé d'Affaires took a farewell interview with the Shah, who was about to start for Europe, thought it best not to mention the subject; but, on withdrawing, he was informed orally by the Grand Vizier that the rescript had been laid before the Shah, "who regarded it as of binding force." The Grand Vizier added that for the next ten years the question of concessions would not arise owing to the Russian Railway Agreement, but that if the Russians raised it, the Shah would produce his father's promise to Great Britain. The Minister for Foreign Affairs told Mr. Spring-Rice that this was the answer to his official note.

The Government of India, on the 2nd September, 1907, raised the question of whether the pledges given in 1888 were affected by the recently concluded Anglo-Russian Agreement. The following reply was sent by telegraph on the 25th September, 1907:—

"In the opinion of the Foreign Office, His Majesty's Government would be justified by the wording of the 1888 pledge in asking permission to construct a line in Southern Persia, in the event of Russian Government obtaining a Concession to construct one in the north, though they would clearly be prevented by Anglo-Russian Arrangement regarding Persia from constructing a railway as far as Tehran.

"Our position, both in our own and the neutral spheres, is now stronger than before signature of Convention, as Russian Government have, by the new Arrangement, undertaken not to oppose Concessions supported by His Majesty's Government in British sphere, nor without previous discussion in neutral zone either."

APPENDIX (C).

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[5046] No. 63.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 13.)

Sir,

India Office, February 12, 1908.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Mallet's letter, dated the 30th ultimo, relative to the correspondence that has passed between His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires and the German Legation at Tehran, regarding the Abu Musa question, as reported in Mr. Marling's despatch No. 281 of the 31st December, 1907.

In reply I am to state that no document can be traced in this Department that bears out the statement made in the Memorandum of the 15th November last that the privilege of extracting oxide from Abu Musa "had been leased on a year's basis by the Sheikh of Shargah." The lease granted by the Sheikh's uncle on the 10th April, 1898, fixed the term of the Concession "from the present date for such a period as they (the lessees) may wish to hold the mines, provided that they pay me (the lessor) 250 French dollars per annum." A translation of this document, as Sir E. Grey is aware, formed one of the inclosures to Baron von Stumm's note of the 31st December last, forwarding the statement of Messrs. Wönckhaus' complaint against Sheikh of Shargah.

Subject to these observations, Mr. Morley concurs in Sir E. Grey's proposal to approve Mr. Marling's action.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[5044] No. 64.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 13.)

Sir,

India Office, February 12, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 4th instant, as to the judicial powers of the Political Agent in Bahrein, I am directed to say that, in Mr. Secretary Morley's opinion, the promulgation of an Order in Council as to the Agent's jurisdiction over British subjects may suitably be postponed until the whole question of the position of Bahrein has been considered in the light of any recommendations that may be made by the Committee on the policy of His Majesty's Government in the Persian Gulf.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[4236] No. 65.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 13, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, forwarding copy of a telegram from the Viceroy of India, reporting the conditions on which the Resident in the Persian Gulf has given a guarantee to the German Consul that the labourers employed by Messrs. Wönckhaus in removing their red oxide from Abu Musa Island will not be hindered.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey concurs in Mr. Secretary Morley's proposal to inform the Government of India that the action of the Resident is approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[5475] No. 66.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 66.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February* 11, 1908.

I NOTICE in the Memorandum of information received during November regarding affairs in Arabia that it is in contemplation that provision should be made by Order in Council for the exercise of jurisdiction over foreigners by the Political Agent in Bahrein.

I should like, if permitted, to express my concurrence with this proposal, and my hope that the innovation will be made before foreign interests have time to develop further. It would be unnecessary to make any notification to the Ottoman Government, but knowledge of the fact would undoubtedly reach them and have its utility and significance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[5398] No. 67.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 60.)
Sir, *Berlin, February* 11, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that the "Frankfürter Zeitung" in a recent issue published a letter from its Constantinople correspondent, stating that the Directors of the Hedjaz Railway have made an arrangement with the German geologist, Dr. Blankenkorn, to proceed to Palestine on behalf of the Company in order to prospect for petroleum in the Dead Sea Basin.

After he has concluded the examination of this district, the scientist will proceed southwards and examine the mineral wealth of the country traversed by the Hedjaz line. It is hoped that important results may come of Dr. Blankenkorn's expedition, as the Arabian coast to the south of the Gulf of Akabah was known in antiquity as being rich in different ores.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

[5457] No. 67*.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 77.)
Sir, *St. Petersburgh, February* 12, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY on more than one occasion has expressed to me some anxiety as to the military preparations which the Turkish Government are making on the Russian frontier and in Kurdistan, which, as he remarked to me to-day, had assumed such a character as almost to give the impression that they were meditating a hostile movement when the spring arrived. These warlike measures, mobilization and

calling up of reserves, &c., had been in no wise provoked by any measures on the side of Russia, and he could hardly bring himself to believe that Turkey was meditating war, as there was no possible pretext for such an enterprise. It was possible, he remarked, that Turkey had in view future pressure on the part of the Powers, or some of the Powers, in regard to the Macedonian question and that of the Turco-Persian frontier, and was taking her preparatory measures betimes.

I asked him whether Russia was contemplating any countermove on her part, but he assured me that beyond the slight redistribution of some of her forces in the Caucasus, on which I reported in my despatch No. 12, of the 9th January, the Russian Government had made no move at all. He was puzzled as to what these steps on the part of Turkey portended, which, even admitting that the reports which had reached the Russian Government were a little exaggerated, were still of a nature to give grounds for a certain uneasiness.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON

[5046] No. 68.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 17.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 19, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 281 of the 31st December, 1907, relative to the difficulties which have arisen in connection with the working of the mines of red oxide on Abu Musa Island, in which you forward copies of correspondence which has passed between you and the German Legation at Tehran on this subject.

I observe that in the Memorandum addressed by you to that Legation on the 15th November, 1907, it is stated that the privilege of extracting oxide from Abu Musa "had been leased on a year's basis by the Sheikh of Shargah to a Syndicate of three British subjects"; whereas, in the copy of the contract between the Sheikh and the Syndicate, which is in the possession of this Department, no term for the lease is mentioned; and the India Office, to whom I caused an inquiry on this point to be addressed, state, as you will perceive from the inclosed copy of a letter from them,* that there is in their archives no document bearing out the assertion.

Apart from this statement, which would thus appear to be erroneous, I approve the language of the communications which you have addressed to the German Legation, as well as that of your proposed warning to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[5948] No. 69.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 20.)

Sir, *India Office, February* 19, 1908.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to forward, to be laid before Secretary Sir E. Grey, copies of three telegrams from the Government of India, dated the 16th February last, regarding affairs at Abu Musa.

As regards the telegrams Nos. 1 and 2, Mr. Morley proposes, subject to Sir E. Grey's concurrence, to send to the Viceroy the telegram, of which a draft is inclosed, and to repeat it to Major Cox for guidance.

As regards telegram No. 3, it will be seen from its final paragraph that the Government of India have still to express their views on the whole case, and Mr. Morley proposes therefore to reserve for the present any comments in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

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* No 63.

Inclosure 1 in No. 69.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February* 16, 1908.

ABU MUSA.

Resident telegraphed on the 12th instant as follows:—

"1,500*l.* must be value of accumulation which German firm is going to remove. Half should be paid on shipment and half may have been paid already, according to terms of the contract. Demand might, I suggest, be made that, as security for advances alleged to have been made to Hassan, whole or part of above-mentioned sum of money should be deposited with us. I had better discover whether any of this accumulation has actually been paid for or not before any communication is made to German Government."

Procedure laid down in paragraph 9 of Foreign Office letter of the 8th ultimo is in our opinion preferable.

Inclosure 2 in No. 69.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February* 16, 1908.

SITUATION in Abu Musa Island.

Resident has received intimation from German Consul that Messrs. Wonckhaus desire to send ship to island about middle of March for purpose of removing oxide. Permission also requested by firm that, in order to clear oxide bulk which is not yet ready for shipment, a large number of coolies may be placed on island for three weeks before arrival of steamer. Provided there is no further mining we see no objection to this, as concurrence of Sheikh can be secured by Resident, measures being taken by which friction between concessionnaires' men and retainers of Sheikh will be prevented. Concessionnaires' men should, however, all leave by ship in which oxide is removed.

We should be glad if instructions could be communicated direct to Resident, Persian Gulf, and request early orders.

Inclosure 3 in No. 69.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February* 16, 1908.

ABU MUSA.

My telegram of 4th instant.

Resident telegraphed on the 12th instant as follows in reply to telegram from us of the 29th ultimo:—

"(1.) My record contains absolutely no evidence suggesting that Sheikh Salim is owner of island or mines. There is, on the contrary, ample evidence showing the island to be recognized as belonging to that section of the Jowasim tribe, dwelling on the pirate coast, of which the head, in whom all territorial rights and quasi-sovereignty are vested, is the ruling Chief of Shargeh.

"The present Sheikh has never failed, according to the records of the Residency, to keep alive these rights by documentary assertion, and it was for him, as Sheikh of the Jowasim, and not for Sheikh Salim, that we recovered the island in 1904.

"In 1902, when no dispute existed in respect to concession, the Sheikh stated in a letter to the Resident that Sheikh Salim had granted concession while acting as Regent during temporary absence of himself. It has been held that Sheikh Salim has possessed no rights of jurisdiction either on Abu Musa or anywhere else since his ejectment from the Sheikhship in 1883, and he has been merely a pensioner who, on condition of his loyalty and obedience, receives a stipend from ruling Sheikh. Residency letter of the 8th August, 1883, furnished a copy of documentary agreements by which this stipend was first fixed. On the 16th June, 1884, Sheikh Sagar having failed to pay this allowance regularly, Sheikh Salim came to see Residency Agent, and represented himself as being in absolute penury, and implored Agent to induce Sheikh to provide a bare subsistence allowance for him. Substitution of second agreement, reported in letter of the 10th July, 1884, from Residency, was result of Agent's efforts.

"In 1888 there again was a breach of the agreement; a third agreement was, however, executed, by Residency Agent's good offices, under which a fixed allowance of 400 dollars was now paid to Salim, who was permitted to go back to Shargeh, and secured employment as adviser or vizier to his nephew. So far as we know, this document and arrangement are still in force.

"Although I cannot state it for certain without inquiry at Shargeh, the presumption is that Sheikh Salim is permitted to receive the 250 dollars coming annually from the concessionnaires as part of his pension. Sheikh Sagar, who himself only enjoys sovereign territorial rights in Abu Musa as ruling Chief of Jowasim clan, has in any case no power to alienate such rights, and we are under obligation, in the interests of the Principality, to cause to be cancelled, as having been granted *ultra vires*, any document that may have been passed to Sheikh Salim, making over such rights. It is a recognized custom, on the other hand, for the ruling Chief of all such Oriental Principalities, on whom the maintenance of numerous relatives falls, to give them the enjoyment of landed property within the State instead of cash allowances. It is possible at any time, at the will of the Ruler, to suspend this arrangement, which is purely a family one, and, in the case of our protected Chiefs, the Rules of the Chief's Treaty obligations to us would be violated if his relatives were to alienate such property.

"(2.) Copies of German inclosures 4 (*d*) and 4 (*e*) will, I hope, be procurable.

"(3.) After visiting Shargeh I will send comments on question of non-consent of all partners.

"(4.) As regards transfer of share to Mr. Brown, on the 10th October, Hassan Samaiyeh at that date no longer had any rights which he could transfer, whole concession having been cancelled on the 21st February. It may be presumed, as date of transfer is the same as that of final notice to quit, that Mr. Brown and Hassan, seeing that Sheikh meant business, concocted these letters of marque. Endeavour to obtain further information will be made. It is worthy of note that German case repeatedly calls Mr. Brown a British subject, and probably has motive in so doing, whereas German Minister in addressing Legation calls him a German subject. To best of my belief I was told some years ago, either by Mr. Brown himself or by Mr. Wonckhaus, that the former was a naturalized German; at all events, he has never registered himself or referred in any way to British Consulate. He was born and bred in Germany, and speaks English with German accent.

"I would call attention, with reference to German inclosure 4 (*c*), to the inaccuracy, both in German translation and in that forwarded with my letter of the 6th December, 1906, of words 'share of oxide mines.' The deed makes no mention of mines, and a strictly accurate rendering of the Arabic would be 'share in Oxide Company.' I would invite reference to Residency Administration Reports for 1881, 1884, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1898 in connection with above alteration. I will submit further comments hereafter."

Following was text of our telegram No. 55:—

"Please telegraph your observations as early as possible after receipt of papers regarding Abu Musa direct from India Office. You are requested to report in particular whether any evidence exists that rights of ownership on the island belonged to Sheikh's uncle. Is it possible to establish that payment of annual rent was made, not to the uncle, but to ruling Sheikh himself?

"Can precise wording of inclosure in notification 4 (*d*) and 4 (*e*) to German case be ascertained?

"It is desire of His Majesty's Government that case should be dealt with as a commercial dispute, and that Messrs. Wonckhaus' concession should be cancelled on the ground that all partners did not consent, and that one of them spontaneously protested. All facts bearing on this contention and the arguments in German case thereupon will no doubt be thoroughly examined by you. Your opinion might also be given (1) as to the effect of transfer of share to a foreigner (viz., Mr. Wonckhaus) without Sheikh's consent on the 10th October, and (2) in regard to Mr. Brown's claims to mines and concession for these, as security for advances, as put forward by him in his letters to Sheikh, dated the 31st October, 1907. Treaty of 1892 might perhaps be infringed by this, or such infringement might result therefrom."

On receipt of further communication from Resident, I will express views on whole case.

[5948] No. 70.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 22, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, transmitting copies of telegrams from the Government of India and the draft of a telegram which it is proposed to send to the Government of India in reply to the telegrams marked 1 and 2 in your letter on the subject of the Red Oxide Concession on Abu Musa.

I am to state, in reply, that Sir E. Grey concurs in the terms of the draft telegram to the Government of India, but I am to add that he presumes, from the wording of Mr. Morley's telegram to the Government of India of the 20th ultimo, that a British official will be present during the removal of the red oxide now accumulated on the beach and awaiting shipment.

With regard to the telegram from the Viceroy marked No. 3 in your letter under reply, I am to state that Sir E. Grey concurs in the proposal of Mr. Morley to reserve any comments until the Government of India have expressed their views on the whole case.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[6325] No. 71.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 76.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February* 18, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 594 of the 18th September, 1907, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, reporting on the progress of the Hedjaz Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 71.

Consul Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 3.)
Sir, *Jeddah, February* 3, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to submit the following information respecting the progress of the Hedjaz Railway:—

Work is being done from Medina (where the foundation-stone of a station was laid with much ceremony on the 6th October, 1907), as well as from the present rail-head about 100 miles from that town, and the railway is expected to be completed to Medina by next autumn. From Medina it appears to have been decided to prolong it to Mecca viâ Rabigh and Jeddah, which route is not only free from serious engineering difficulties but well-supplied with water; whereas the eastern or highland route from Medina to Mecca, also free from serious engineering difficulties, lacks water. Rabigh is a small town of about 3,000 inhabitants, 3 miles from the sea and about 70 miles to the north of Jeddah. The Bay of Rabigh is thus described in the "Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot," 1900, p. 264: "An inlet about 2 miles long, affording excellent anchorage inside its entrance in from 8 to 12 fathoms, perfectly sheltered from all winds and easy of ingress and egress to sailing-vessels when north-westerly winds are blowing. In the entrance are from 18 to 20 fathoms, and immediately outside no bottom within 30 fathoms. Rabigh is a sacred spot to Mussulman pilgrims, who here disrobe and put on the white garb of pilgrims" [*i.e.*, those pilgrims who come by the caravan route from Medina to Mecca]. The Government is already making arrangements for steamers to bring railway material to Rabigh, and a pier is, it is said, to be built there.

The Bedouins interested in camel transport between Medina and the coast, and between Medina and Mecca, appear to have taken alarm. Kiazim Pasha, the Mushir in charge of the whole of the Hedjaz Railway construction, came to Medina about a

month ago. On the 10th or 11th of January, he was proceeding from Medina to Rabigh with a large escort, said to have been of over 1,000 cavalry, when he was attacked at Bir-al-Mashi, 10 hours from Medina, by Bedouins of the Beni Amir clan of the Auf tribe, who killed eight or nine soldiers and wounded some, and themselves lost three killed. It is said that he returned to Mecca on the 14th (Bairam day) and there took part in the Bairam ceremonies and telegraphed to the Palace, and that Constantinople has promised him a force of 30,000 men, including cavalry and infantry and sappers and miners, to push on the line and punish the Bedouins. He is now back in camp at Bir-al-Mashi. The pilgrim route from Yambo to Medina was for some time closed in consequence of the above incident, Kiazim Pasha having imprisoned eight Sheikhs of those parts, which exasperated the Bedouins; but it has now been reopened, he having released the Sheikhs by order from Constantinople, and the first caravan, a large one of 6,000 camels, is about to start or has already started from Yambo.

The Sheikh of Rabigh, the virtual local governor, is said to be in favour of the Government's railway project, as Rabigh and his small tribe, which is in its vicinity, would benefit from the increased importance of that town and district. Jeddah town will lose from the railway, as the pilgrims will merely pass through without stopping, and as the import of wheat and barley by sea will be greatly diminished. Imported barley, a food of the pilgrimage camels, will be very much less needed in the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

[6327] No. 72.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 78.)
Sir, *Pera, February* 18, 1908.

I HAVE recently received from Mr. Heard, His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, a report on the condition of the Chaldeans in the Jezireh and Eruh districts, from which it appears that they have been suffering considerably at the hands of the Kurds, and that little effort has been made by the authorities to protect them, although Mr. Heard does not specify any outrage of a very serious nature.

The protection of the Chaldean Christians is a matter in which special interest is taken by my French colleague, and it does not seem necessary for this Embassy to take the lead in representations to the Sublime Porte on the subject, but I have nevertheless, both independently and in communication with the French Embassy, brought the question to the notice of the Grand Vizier.

His Highness now informs me that, as a result of punitive measures against the Kurdish tribes in the Jezireh district, the Kurdish Chief Haji Bern and three others, who were responsible for depredations, have just been captured in the Bohtan Valley, while in the Kaza of Eruh a number of rifles have been captured from Kurds, against whom troops had been sent to chastise them for their lawless behaviour.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[6408] No. 73.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 92.)
Sir, *St. Petersburgh, February* 21, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 77 of the 12th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation in French of an official announcement which was published in this morning's newspapers in regard to the military preparations which it was said were being made both by Russia and Turkey in view of the possibility of an armed conflict between the two Powers.

From the inclosed announcement it will be seen that an official denial is given to the reports which were in circulation as to a mobilization of Russian troops or a concentration of Russia's forces in the Caucasus.

It will be seen further that the Turkish Ambassador has been instructed to explain to the Russian Government that the measures which Turkey has taken have been solely for the protection of the Turkish frontier from possible danger from Persia, and that the relations between Turkey and Russia are as friendly as ever.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON

Inclosure in No. 73.

Extract from the "Journal de Saint-Pétersbourg" of February 8 (21), 1908.

L'AGENCE Télégraphique de Saint-Pétersbourg fait la communication suivante:—

"Les renseignements donnés par la presse concernant des préparatifs de guerre, faits tant par la Russie que par la Turquie, ont donné naissance à des bruits alarmants sur la possibilité d'un conflit armé entre ces deux Puissances.

"Nous sommes autorisés à déclarer que tous les bruits annonçant la mobilisation de certaines troupes, le transport au sud, et la concentration des troupes dans le Transcaucase, sont absolument faux. La Russie ne prend donc aucune mesure extraordinaire, relativement aux troupes, sur la frontière Turque.

"Quant à la Turquie, à ce que nous savons de source certaine, elle vient, de sa propre initiative, de confirmer officiellement le démenti, déjà publié par l'intermédiaire de l'Agence 'Correspondenz-Bureau,' opposé par elle aux bruits selon lesquels elle ferait des préparatifs militaires près de notre frontière. L'Ambassadeur de Turquie à Saint-Pétersbourg a été chargé par son Gouvernement de déclarer au Ministre Russe des Affaires Étrangères, que la Turquie n'a pris que les mesures nécessaires pour assurer la sécurité de ses frontières du côté de la Perse, en vue de l'agitation qui règne parmi les Kurdes qui se trouvent près de la frontière; qu'elle n'a fait point de préparatifs militaires dans la région Caucasienne et qu'elle est, comme précédemment, pénétrée de bons sentiments à l'égard de la Russie.

"Ainsi, la possibilité d'un conflit armé entre la Russie et la Turquie est niée assez clairement par les bonnes intentions et les sentiments exprimés tant d'un côté que de l'autre."

[5332] No. 74.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 68.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 24, 1908.

I DULY received your Excellency's despatch No. 30 of the 21st ultimo, reporting that written instructions had been sent to the present Kaïmakam of El Katif to tender a formal apology to the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" on his next visit, for the discourtesy shown to him at that place in June last.

In view, however, of the fact, as stated in the last paragraph of your Excellency's despatch, that His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" may not visit El Katif for some time to come, His Majesty's Government think it desirable that the Kaïmakam of El Katif should be instructed to make the apology to the Commanding Officer of the first British war-ship which calls at that place.

I request that your Excellency will inform the Turkish Government accordingly, and ask that instructions in this sense may be sent to the Kaïmakam without delay.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[6662] No. 75.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received February* 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, and with reference to the India Office letter of the 19th instant, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 21st instant, regarding affairs at Abu Musa.

A copy has been sent to the Director of Military Operations and to the Director of Naval Intelligence.

India Office, February 25, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 75.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February* 21, 1908.

ABU MUSA. My telegram dated 16th instant.

Resident telegraphed on 14th instant as follows:—

"I should be glad if you would give numbers from 1 to 32 to the clauses of German firm's complaint, as set forth in Foreign Office Print of 1st January for reference purposes.

"1. I will send, after inquiry at Shargah, further report regarding precise rights of Sheikh Salim on island. He has hitherto never attempted to assert any independent rights over island or mines, though as adviser to Sheikh, he has been present at all interviews between Sheikh and myself and Consul, Bunder Abbas.

"2. Third partner asserted in his complaint to Sheikh, dated 20th February, 1907, that Hassan had no power to act without other partners' consent, and Inclosure 2 of German Case clearly corroborates this.

"3. Please refer to my telegram No. 17. On 10th October Hassan, a British subject, sold a share in a Concession which no longer existed to Brown, another British subject. Action for obtaining money by false pretences should therefore, theoretically, be brought by Brown against Hassan in British Court, and civil claim for refund of price paid for share of non-existent concern should be entered by Wönckhaus against Brown in British Court.

"4. Besides Wönckhaus, a fourth party was also included in the Company, according to Inclosure 2 of German Case.

"7. I had not before seen Inclosures 16 to 24.

"10. Please refer to my telegram No. 17 in regard to Brown's nationality. Why did he not complain to British Consular authorities, if he, a British subject, was attacked by British-protected person on island?

"15. The person described as 'the young Esa' is about 30 years old, and a family man.

"22. It was at Brown's express bidding that German contract was kept secret. Written statement in original to this effect by Hassan Samaiyeh is in my possession. Still less is it the case that the contract was ever attested by British Agent, Lingah, or registered in the British Court. The grant of Concessions by the Trucial Chiefs without consulting British authorities is prohibited by standing injunctions. There is every necessity for this, in order to prevent unscrupulous persons exploiting these unsophisticated Arabs.

"23. German Case carefully omits letter to which their Inclosure No. 6 is a reply. That letter merely gave a garbled account of the document without forwarding a copy of it. Third partner, who knows no English, saw it was objectionable, and repudiated it directly on receiving a copy and getting it translated into Arabic. The meaning 'it should be annulled' is politely conveyed in the sentence 'annulment is preferable to its continuance.' It is possible that Hassan himself never accurately understood the contract, as it was in English, or perhaps Brown gave him incorrect Arabic translation of it.

"26 and 27. Fraud or invalidity of transaction between two British subjects seems to be basis of whole German Case.

"32. I will report later, after obtaining precise details.

"The words, 'as long as they choose to possess,' in Inclosure 1 to German Case are inaccurately translated. 'As long as there is to them a purpose in the mines' is the correct rendering.

"The inclusion of Inclosure 2 is curious. Ali, the fourth partner, is believed to have rejected overtures of German Consulate, and to have refused to certify his cognizance of and concurrence with German contract, but it was probably under the impression that he or his heir could be got to do so that this document was included. I am following up the point.

"My record does not contain Inclosure 3.

"As regards words, 'share in Oxide Company,' in Inclosure 4 (*c*), I trust that before making any reply to German Case it will be possible to wait until local inquiries enable me to report further and submit documents. Pressing urgency is perhaps small, as arrangements for shipping accumulated oxide are progressing satisfactorily.

"I have desired Port Officer to telegraph me any instructions, as I am now leaving for Lingah and Henjam."

Following further telegram received from Resident, dated 18th instant:—

"(*a.*) It is necessary to correct information regarding Brown's nationality sent from Bushire. It appears from inquiry at Lingah that in 1901 he had British passport, and that when in Lingah he has occasionally received assistance in connection with his private affairs from our agent.

"(*b.*) Inclosure 4 (*d*) to German Case follows Inclosures 4 (*b*) and 4 (*c*), and is an indorsement recorded in Arabic on the original Inclosure 4 (*a*). It is clear that Inclosure 4 (*c*) reproduces further indorsement on the same document.

"Indorsement 4 (*c*) is not included in copy with concessionnaires, and the Germans have the original paper. When Brown wrote to Sheikh of Shargah letter dated 13th October, of which copy was sent to Government of India with Bunder Abbas letter of 25th October, why did he not refer to 4 (*d*), if it was executed on 10th October? Probably it was arranged either prior to or during visit to Bushire early in November last of Brown and son of concessionnaire Hassan. It was as outcome of this visit that German Consul dispatched his assistant and his letters of 19th November, mentioning arrangement in question, to Shargah."

[6698] No. 76.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received February* 26.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 22nd instant, relative to affairs at Abu Musa.

A copy has been sent to the Director of Military Operations and to the Director of Naval Intelligence.

India Office, February 25, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 76.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

India Office, February 22, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

YOUR two short telegrams dated the 16th instant: Abu Musa.

Resident, Persian Gulf, should be instructed to inform German Consul that there is no objection to proposal to send ship about middle of March to the island, or to landing of coolies three weeks before that date, but that all coolies should leave by the ship sent, and that no further mining can be allowed.

It will be best, as regards Resident's telegram No. 116 to you, to limit action as you suggest to that proposed in paragraph 9 of letter dated the 8th ultimo from Foreign Office, operations being conducted in the presence of British official.

(Repeated to Resident, Persian Gulf.)

[38360] No. 77.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 27, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 21st November, 1907, and the 15th ultimo, respecting the proposal of the Government of India to open a pearl-fishery within the territorial waters of Perim.

I am to state, in reply, that Sir E. Grey observes that the Government of India propose, in order to evade the difficulty involved in this instance by the question of overlapping territorial waters, to omit any definition of "the territorial waters of Perim" from the regulation which would be required to insure the proper management and control of the fishery, and they presume that recourse may be had by analogy to the definition of "territorial waters" given in section 7 of "The Territorial Waters Jurisdiction Act, 1878."

I am to state that the analogy would, in Sir E. Grey's opinion, not seem to apply in the present case, since the definition in the Act quoted is that of the "marine league," which could not be held to cover a question of overlapping jurisdiction, where, in the absence of a Treaty or Convention between the riparian owners, the *medium filum aquæ* would form in principle the proper line of demarcation.

The most satisfactory solution would be the conclusion of an Agreement with the Ottoman Government, but the present time would not be opportune for opening negotiations on the subject.

In these circumstances I am to suggest, for the consideration of Mr. Secretary Morley, that it might be advisable to omit all reference to territorial waters in the proposed regulation, and if the question of jurisdiction should be raised by the Ottoman Government at any future time, His Majesty's Government might, as then seemed best to them, either assert the *medium filum aquæ* doctrine or enter upon negotiations for a special Convention, securing the most advantageous terms available.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[7079] No. 78.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received February* 29.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 29th instant, relative to Abu Musa.

India Office, February 29, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February* 29, 1908.

ABU MUSA Island.

Your telegram of the 22nd instant.

Major Cox telegraphed on the 26th instant, as follows:—

"Papers follow by mail. Sheikh Salim declares ownership of island and mines to be vested in ruling Sheikh, and denies emphatically that he ever claimed any independent rights of ownership over them. Results favourable to our case have been produced by other inquiries made at Shargah."

[6230] No. 79.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Foreign Office, February 29, 1908.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to state, for the information of the Secretary of State for India, that Sir C. Spring-Rice recently met Herr Wönckhaus, who, in the course of conversation, alluded to the export of red oxide from the Island of Abu Musa.

Herr Wönckhaus is reported to have stated that documentary evidence was in his possession to the effect that "the British Resident in the Persian Gulf had instructed the Sheikh of Shargah not to enter into an agreement with a German firm."

This statement would seem to go somewhat further than the action which was reported in Major Cox' letter of the 29th November, 1906, which forms the inclosure in your letter of the 15th June, 1907. According to the correspondence forwarded by Major Cox, the Sheikh was warned against entering into any agreement with the German firm without previous consultation with the Resident. A warning of this qualified nature differs essentially from an absolute veto such as that implied by Herr Wönckhaus, and is, in the opinion of Sir E. Grey, fully justified by the obligations of His Majesty's Government towards the Trucial Chiefs, whose material welfare is closely bound up with the maintenance of order in the Persian Gulf, and whose means of livelihood are so slender as to render any ill-considered arrangement of far-reaching effect.

I am to inquire whether Mr. Morley is satisfied that the warning reported by Major Cox in his letter above referred to constitutes the only communication made by him in this connection before Messrs. Wönckhaus had acquired an interest in the Concession, or whether there is reason to suppose that some warning of a nature similar to that alleged by Herr Wönckhaus was also conveyed to the Sheikh and has not been reported.

I am further to inquire, with reference to my letter of the 28th December, whether the Government of India have yet formulated suggestions as to the future working of the Concession on Abu Musa.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[7099] No. 80.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 77.)

Berlin, February 23, 1908.

Sir,

IT appears that a report has been recently published in an Arabian paper, the "Moajad," to the effect that some German colonists from Joppa have settled on the Farsan Islands in the Red Sea; and that Germany is negotiating with Turkey for the acquisition of these islands. A Berlin correspondent of the "Kölnische Zeitung" telegraphs to that paper that this is merely a revival of old suspicions of Germany, and that there is no truth in the report. To anyone who knows the desert, sunburnt character of these islands, the idea of their colonization by German settlers must seem nothing more than a bad joke. The world has not been so completely parcelled out as yet as to make it necessary for Germany to have recourse to the occupation of the Farsan Islands.

A number of German newspapers have quoted this telegram in their columns as being officially inspired.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

Annex.

Memorandum respecting German Coaling Station on the Farsan Islands.

THE Farsan Islands are situated on the east side of the Red Sea, opposite Yemen, about latitude 16° 30′ north, longitude 42° 10′ east. They consist of two large and several smaller islands, the former being connected by a sandy spit of shoal water, across which camels frequently pass. The westernmost, Farsan Kebir, is 31 miles long, and the other, Farsan Seggir, about 18 miles. Sir F. Lascelles, No. 77, February 23, 1908. (7099.)

They are the largest islands anywhere along the eastern side of the Red Sea; they lie westward of Ras Turfa and of Gizan on the mainland, and from them is named the vast bank extending a distance of about 320 miles parallel with the eastern coast and dividing the central track through the Red Sea from the narrow Inner Channel on its eastern side. Lippincott's "New Gazette of the World," p. 635. "Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot" (5th edition, 1906), p. 322.

Turkish sovereignty over these islands is not questioned.

There was considerable correspondence in 1900–01 respecting an attempt made by Germany to obtain a coaling station at Kounih (or Kumh) Island in Tibtu (Tibtu) Bay, on the west side of Great Farsan Island.

The incident was summed up in the following statement made by Sir N. O'Conor in September 1901, when reporting a conversation with Nowri Bey:— Sir N. O'Conor, No. 384, September 6, 1901.

"Towards the end of last year the German Government requested the Sultan to give them a special coaling depôt at Farsan, and submitted the terms of an Agreement which they desired to have accepted. The Sultan, however, did not see his way to comply with their request, but undertook to establish a coaling station on Kounih, a smaller island of the same group. Upon this the German Embassy dropped the question, and the Sultan concluded that they were satisfied with the arrangement he proposed, particularly as he had immediately sent some thousand tons of coal there, which was available for ships. A few days ago, however, the Ottoman Government learnt that the Germans now insisted on a coaling depôt of their own at Farsan, and were making arrangements for this purpose independently of the Turkish authorities. The Sultan was very angry, and Nowri Bey had been ordered to protest energetically against such summary and illegal proceedings."

Sir N. O'Conor went on to say that he had since heard, though he could not vouch for its accuracy, that the Russian Embassy intimated unofficially to the Sultan that if the German Government obtained a coaling station at Farsan they would equally demand similar facilities there, or in the neighbourhood.

The real German objective was feared to be, not Farsan, but Kamaran Island. Paragraphs 6 and 7 of a Report on the question, made by the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Pyramus," run as follows:— Inclosure in Admiralty, March 22, 1901.

"6. The anchorage off Kumh and the harbour of Tibtu Bay is a good one, and little difficulty would be experienced in making jetties out to the edge of the reef, so that ships could go alongside, and possibly a very good coal depôt might be established.

"Against this—

"(*a.*) A coal depôt at Farsan can never have any commercial value.
"(*b.*) It is at present extremely risky, if not dangerous, of approach.
"(*c.*) It is out of the track of shipping proceeding through the Red Sea.
"(*d.*) The expense to properly light and buoy the approaches would be enormous.
"(*e.*) The whole group requires resurveying and on a larger scale chart.
"(*f.*) The labour has to be imported from Hodeida or Luheiya, and all provisions, &c., would have to be brought into the island, so at present I cannot see that a coaling station at Kumh Island can have any commercial value.

"7. In stating my opinion on the object of the German movement in this quarter, I do so with great diffidence. The Germans apparently are anxious to secure a suitable site for a coaling station, and no one who has been to Farsan Islands could for a moment consider any of the harbours in these islands suitable. The Germans also, it would be observed, are spending no money in constructing a depôt, but they appear to have forced the hand of the Turkish Government, in so far that they are building a

coal store, and will have 10,000 tons of coal in stock, and, on the authority of the Turkish Commandant, this coal is available for the use of all countries. I would, therefore, unhesitatingly give it as my opinion that the idea on the part of Germany of establishing a depôt at Farsan group is only done with the object of obtaining something better. Kamaran Bay is a magnificent harbour, and presents every possibility. The Germans at present appear to be more interested in Kamaran than Farsan, and, if one might forecast the future, I would say that when the Turks have completed store and got their coal there, the navigation will be found too dangerous for Germany (perhaps the "Marie" will be wrecked there). Germany will then ask that the depôt may be shifted to Kamaran. The Turkish Government would hardly be expected to go to the expense of a new store, and doubtless Germany would be prepared to defray the expense. When once there was a German coal station in Kamaran, it would give them a prior interest over any other European country in the finest harbour in the Red Sea; and I, therefore, have come to the conclusion that Germany's object is Kamaran, and not such an absurdly situated harbour as that where the coal depôt is now being constructed."

Inclosure in Sir N. O'Conor, No. 141, April 10, 1906.

In a Confidential Memorandum by Consul Devey the following extract was quoted from a private letter from Vice-Consul Husain, then at Kamaran:—

"It may be that Germany has an eye upon Kamaran instead of Farsan, and *if she succeeded in this idea, she will have the whole of Yemen under her influence.* There cannot be any doubt that Kamaran, by its situation and fine anchorage, is a much more desirable place than Farsan."

Consul Devey did not agree with the Vice-Consul's opinion above underlined, but held that Germany would certainly obtain some influence at Hodeida, and at Loheiya, if she were desirous of exerting it among the coast Arabs—a condition which might easily prove harmful to British trade interests.

Sir N. O'Conor, No. 446, June 27, 1905.

In June 1905, Sir N. O'Conor reported that the Italian Chargé d'Affaires had been informed by his Government that a German ship had anchored off one of the Farsan Islands and landed two men, who had remained after the ship's departure.

Inclosure in Admiralty, August 7, 1905.

Inclosure in Admiralty, August 30, 1905.

Inquiries were made by the Admiralty, and the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Persens" reported that there was nothing at Farsan Island or Kamaran to show that the Germans intended to re-establish a coaling station. Everything was in the same state as when the Germans left the island about five years ago, and there was no knowledge whatever of their returning to establish a coaling station. There were no Germans on the island, and no German man-of-war had visited the place for over three years. A guard of ten Turkish soldiers was stationed at Koumh Island, and guards were reported to be on all the other islands. These men had been on Koumh Island since the Germans left, and knew nothing about the coal store being completed and the island made into a coaling station.

Here the matter seems to have rested until 1907 (See Sir N. O'Conor, No. 306, the 27th May, 1907 [17999]).

(Signed) EDWARD PARKES.

Foreign Office, March 6, 1908.

[7791] No. 81.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received March* 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosure in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 23rd January, relative to the administration of the Bahrein customs.

India Office, March 5, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 81.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Bushire, January 5, 1908.

WITH reference to the correspondence ending with Foreign Department indorsement, dated the 1st December, 1906, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, a copy of a communication received from the Political Agent at Bahrein on the subject of the administration of the customs at Bahrein.

There seems some reason to hope that Sheikh Esa's attitude is becoming less hostile than before to the idea of intrusting his customs to our management.

The present "farm" expires almost at once, and the progress of the Sheikh's arrangements for the conduct of the customs administration will be attentively watched.

Inclosure 2 in No. 81.

Captain Prideaux to Major Cox.

Bahrein, December 7, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to refer to correspondence ending with your Office indorsement dated the 21st October, 1906, on the subject of the reformation of the customs administration in Bahrein.

2. In view of the decision of the Government of India expressed in Foreign Department letter dated the 2nd October, 1906, to your address, I have not troubled the Sheikh again on the question, but Messrs. Gray Paul and Co. have been tentatively making bids, I understand, which naturally are not as materially advantageous to the Chief as the Government of India's arrangement would be if the bugbear of infringement of sovereignty were satisfactorily overcome.

3. The Arab merchants, I believe, are jealous of the possibility of the firm's being given the Concession, and I have heard the views of their leader, Haji Muqbil adh Dhakair, on the subject. He told me that the only fear the merchants entertained regarding the Government's concerning itself in the administration was that they would be harassed to a greater extent than at present by demands for cash payments and regulations of a "red tape" order in general, whereas at the present time their accounts are kept in a commercial sort of way and only settled periodically.

4. I told Haji Muqbil that the Government of India only wished to benefit the trade of Bahrein and to increase the Chief's revenue through this means, so that it was certain that any reasonable desires of the mercantile community would be considerately and carefully attended to.

5. Haji Muqbil then said that as he had a good deal of influence with the Chief just now, he having been principally instrumental in getting the Persian Haji Abdun Nabi evicted from the cargo-landing management, he would sound the Chief on the question of the customs and give him his opinion in our favour.

6. In the result, Sheikh Esa told Haji Muqbil that he had decided to introduce direct management of the customs as soon as the Concession expired, and that he would place two Hindus and two of his own Arab officials with salaries on the work, keeping the accounts in Arabic, with a view to giving the system a trial for a year or two.

He would afterwards perhaps give the Government of India's nominees a trial, to see which worked the more profitably. Haji Muqbil thinks, and I agree with him, that the first arrangement proposed will soon break down, as it is hardly more to the interest of the Hindus than of the Arabs that it should succeed, and thereafter, as the Chief at present rather thinks himself bound in honour not to revert to the system of farming, he may apply to us to intervene.

As the Chief's standard of honour in money matters is not of a high order, it remains to be seen what the future brings forth.

[7769] No. 82.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received March 6.*)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in letters from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 23rd and 30th January, relative to affairs at Bu Musa.

It is requested that the original inclosures may be returned to this Office when done with.

India Office, March 5, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 82.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Bushire, January 12, 1908.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram dated 13th December, 1907, I have the honour to place on record the Shargah version of what took place at the interview between the German Consulate Mirza and Sheikh Sagar on or about the 28th November.

2. I beg to invite attention to the fact that the Persian Mirza of the German Consulate does not know Arabic, and that the interpreter employed was Abdullah-bin-Hassan Someiyah, one of the interested concessionnaires, who may have put any words he pleased into the Sheikh's mouth.

3. I also venture to commend to notice a letter from M. Wönckhaus, published in the London "Standard" of the 17th December. In it M. Wönckhaus writes:—

"My firm has no other interest in the Island of Bu Musa but the oxide mines, for which we have contracted with the legal owners. This is our sole interest, and everything else that has been written about coal depôt, seizure of goods, contraband of war, as arms and ammunition, &c., is perfect nonsense. There never was any coal on the Island of Bu Musa (and is not likely to be either); the island is quite uninhabited. *There never were any goods of ours on the island*, nor has there ever been a single arm nor any ammunition of ours either."

In view of Mr. Brown's statement that on the occasion when shots were fired at him, or over him, he had gone to the island to protect the property of the firm (a statement corroborated by my German colleague during the conversation mentioned in my telegram of the 10th instant), the sentence underlined seems worthy of record.*

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. Z. COX, *Major*,

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

Inclosure 2 in No. 82.

Residency Agent, Shargah, to Major Cox.

(After compliments.)

December 31, 1907.

I HAVE received your letter dated 22nd December, 1907, requesting for a full report of the doings of Mirza Hussein, Munshi to the German Consul, during his stay at Shargah.

The Mirza arrived at Shargah, viâ Debai, in a mashowa at about 9 A.M., and went directly to the house of Sheikh Sagar, being accompanied by Abdullah-bin-Hassan-bin-Someiyah and another person who was not well known.

The conversation held between Mirza Hussein and Sheikh Sagar was, as I learned from the Sheikh, carried on through the medium of an interpreter—Abdullah-bin-Hassan aforesaid—as Mirza Hussein could not speak Arabic.

Herewith I beg to forward a descriptive detail of the conversation, as furnished to me by Sheikh Sagar when he consulted me about the two letters from the German Consul.

* Printed in italics.

Apart from this, I have received news that Abdullah-bin-Hassan has publicly spoken with the Arabs that Hassan-bin-Someiyah had addressed the British Resident at Bushire on the subject of the red oxide, and had received an answer from the Resident that he will have nothing to do in the matter, but that he has made a reference to the Government of India; and that in consequence of Sheikh Sagar's molestation, the German men-of-war will inevitably visit Shargah and take the Bu Musa Island from Sheikh Sagar by force, with a compensation for the loss caused to the German trade by the (case of) red oxide.

This is what I have gathered.

Inclosure 3 in No. 82.

Memorandum showing Details of a Conversation held between Mirza Hussein and Sheikh Sagar, and carried on through the medium of an Interpreter, as the Mirza could not speak Arabic.

Mirza Hussein.—Was the discussion made about the red oxide at Bu Musa made by you or by any one else? Were your boats, in which there were your men, towed to Bu Musa by a ship, or had they gone there themselves? Were the men armed or unarmed? If armed, for what purpose? Are they still remaining in the island and are your officials and men carrying arms with them?

Sheikh Sagar.—There exists a Treaty between us and the British Government from ancient times, and Bu Musa is our island, and its protection is incumbent on us, and my men are constantly on the island for the purpose of guarding it, &c., and they at all times carry arms with them to guard whatever belongs to us.

Mirza Hussein.—None of the sovereigns are aware of your Treaty with the British.*

Sheikh Sagar.—We do not know of any Power besides the British Government.

Mirza Hussein.—Why did your men fire rifle shots at the vessel flying the German colour which visited Bu Musa?

Sheikh Sagar.—When the guards cried at them not to land they took no notice, and so the guards were obliged to fire at them, because I have ordered them not to allow any one landing at the island without my permission.

Mirza Hussein.—Hassan-bin-Someiyah has leased the Bu Musa oxide mines to the German in the same way as he has leased them from Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan, and you have no right to interfere.

Sheikh Sagar.—I am the Chief, and when Salem-bin-Sultan leased the mines to Hassan-bin-Someiyah he did not give him permission to lease them to any other person. In the beginning I did not make any interference in Sheikh Salem's transaction with the Bin Someiyah, because the latter was known to be a naturalized British subject and the extent of his power was known, but as he has transferred the lease to persons who were strangers to us, without consulting me and Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan, we have the right to act against him, because he had no permission to follow such a course as he did. Moreover, Isa-bin-Abdul Latif, who is a partner of Hassan-bin-Someiyah in the red oxide, complained to me that Hassan-bin-Someiyah had leased the red oxide to foreigners without his consent and without consulting him, and that he did not agree to this action of Hassan-bin-Someiyah. I addressed Hassan-bin-Someiyah on the subject, and when he did not give up his line of conduct, I complained to the British Government against Hassan's action, and the German has no right against us.

Mirza Hussein.—Isa is the son of the British Agent and is entitled to protection. Why does he not complain to the Resident?

Sheikh Sagar.—As the island was my property, and the lease has been made by us, and as the action of the Bin Someiyah was calculated to cause us a loss, he made a complaint to me.

Mirza Hussein.—The German Government will certainly make a claim against you for the loss incurred by their trade on account of the red oxide. When their men-of-war reach opposite your country the British Government will not be of any use to you.

Sheikh Sagar.—No matter if the German men-of-war pay us a visit here and take the island by force. But at present I will not give permission to any one to work on the island.

* The Treaty of 1892 is published in Hertslet.—A. P

Mirza Hussein.—The German Consul has sent me to call on you and to tell you by way of advice that you should know that there is still an opportunity to allow Hassan-bin-Someiyah to work on the red oxide islands of Bu Musa, otherwise this matter will hereafter create trouble for you; and if you do not accept the advice, you should write an answer to the German Consul's letter, which I have handed you.

Sheikh Sagar.—I will not write any answer to the Consul.

Mirza Hussein.—To give no answer is (considered) an insult among chiefs. Perhaps you fear the British Government, and so you write no answer. No matter if you transmit the two letters to the British Resident at Bushire.

Sheikh Sagar.—I have no alternative but to send the two letters from the German Consul to the Resident, Bushire.

This is the detail of the conversation as furnished to me by Sheikh Sagar.

(Signed) ABDUL LATIF,
British Agent, Shargah

Inclosure 4 in No. 82.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.) *Bushire, January* 19, 1908.

IN reply to Foreign Department telegram dated the 15th instant, I have the honour to forward copies with translations of the letters addressed by my German colleague to Sheikhs Sagar-bin-Khalid and Salim-bin-Sultan under date the 19th November, 1907.

It seems unnecessary for me to offer any special comment in regard to details of them at the present stage.

Inclosure 5 in No. 82.

Herr Listmann to Sheikh Sagar-bin-Khalid.

(After compliments.) *November* 19, 1907.

THE firm of Robert Wönckhaus and Co. have submitted to me a complaint as follows:—

1. In accordance with your orders, the German firm have been forcibly prevented from taking possession of oxide at the Bu Musa Island which they are entitled to possess in conformity with a valid contract which they have from Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co.

2. Your men, whom you have posted on the Bu Musa Island, have fired rifles at Mr. Thomas Brown, the representative of the said firm at Lingah, and his men, amongst whom was Haji Ali-bin-Tasanker, a subject of the German Government, and endangered their lives, preventing them from landing in the island to safeguard the properties belonging to them and the German steamers.

In respect of the first matter, I have to point that by the contract which Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co. have made with the German firm, he (Hassan) has given them the right to take possession of the oxide in the Bu Musa Island. Whereas Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co. have been acting several years on behalf of all the leaseholders, and whereas many transactions have been carried on in this name, "Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co.," the aforesaid firm are entitled to consider that all the leaseholders are included in that signature. And, likewise, the validity of the contract made by Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co. with the German firm cannot be doubted legally. You have notified to Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co. that you will withdraw the deed of lease from them. Whereas the said deed of lease, dated 18th Zilq'adeh, 1315, is from Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan and not from you, and whereas you yourself have confirmed Sheikh Salim-bin-Sultan's right to give a lease and have also corroborated the validity of that lease by your taking a share in this (present) lease; it is for these reasons not possible for me and I will not agree (to recognize) that you have any rights to nullify this deed of lease.

Furthermore, Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan himself cannot, according to the facts

mentioned in that document, give a notice nullifying the same; and for this reason I would ask you to take such actions, without delay, as may enable Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co. to give delivery of the oxide which has been bought of them by the German firm in accordance with the contract, and Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co. have taken a considerable sum on the oxide, of which a large quantity is to be shipped to Hamburg at the end of the current month. Should this shipment become impossible through your actions, you will naturally become responsible for the loss which will amount to 1,00,000 rupees.

With regard to the second matter, I have reported to my Government and await their instructions.

I have to repeat that the share which you had in the lease of the mines, and which you transferred at the time, has become the property of the firm by purchase, which for this reason has direct concern in the working of the mines without any molestation.

Moreover, Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Abdullah-bin-Hassan Someiyah have given a full power of attorney to the firm of Robert Wönckhaus and Co. on this subject, and the said power of attorney has been produced to me. I request you to give the answer of this letter to its bearer.

This is what was necessary to be explained, and salaams.

Inclosure 6 in No. 82.

Herr Listmann to Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan.

(After compliments.) *November* 19, 1907.

I HAVE to inform you that the firm of Robert Wönckhaus and Co., of Lingah, have, according to a power of attorney which they hold from Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Abdullah-bin-Hassan in this matter, and which they have produced to me, requested me to take action because Sheikh Sagar-bin-Khalid has forcibly driven away and expelled from Bu Musa Island the labourers whom they employ in the mines, and has thus prevented the firms from obtaining from the island the oxide which they have purchased from the leaseholders, Haji Hassan-bin-Ali Someiyah and Co.

As you have bound yourself to the leaseholders, in the deed of lease dated the 15th Zelq'adeh, 1325, to pay respect and honour to their men whom they employ on the oxide mines, it is for you to see that the deed of lease is enforced without molestation and the leaseholders are enabled to act according to the contract with the German firm.

The enforcement of this Act rests with you, and I ask you to do it.

This is what was necessary to be said, and salaams.

[7934] No. 83.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 7.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 4th March, relative to affairs at Abu Musa.

India Office, March 7, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 83.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *March* 4, 1908.

PERSIAN Gulf. Abu Musa case.

His Majesty's Minister at Tehran reports that he was recently informed in conversation by Wönckhaus that documentary evidence in the possession of the latter showed that Sheikh of Shargeh had been instructed not to enter into an agreement with a German firm by British Resident at Bushire. Absolute veto implied by Wönckhaus is by no means indicated by Inclosure 1 and Inclosure 5, Sub-Inclosure 3, of your secret letter of the 27th June last, which show that Sheikh was warned not to enter

into any arrangement with Wönckhaus before consulting Resident. I should be glad to know whether, before Wönckhaus acquired an interest in the Concession, Major Cox ever communicated any other warning to Sheikh, in terms to lend colour to allegation made by Wönckhaus.

Please refer to letter of the 28th December last from Foreign Office, last paragraph. I should be glad to have your suggestions as to future working of the Concession on Abu Musa, in addition to your views on German case.

[39483] No. 84.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 93.) *Foreign Office, March* 10, 1908.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 714 of the 26th November, transmitting a Report from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Bagdad on the right of British vessels to navigate the Tigris above Bagdad.

I request that your Excellency will convey to Major Ramsay the thanks of His Majesty's Government for this interesting Report.

I concur in your Excellency's proposal to instruct Major Ramsay in the sense of the concluding sentence of your despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[8849] No. 85.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 13.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 12th March, relative to Abu Musa.

India Office, March 12, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 85.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

March 12, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

YOUR telegram dated the 4th instant: Abu Musa.

Major Cox telegraphed on the 10th instant as follows, in reply to a telegram from us of the 7th instant:—

"1. See letter of the 3rd December, 1904, from Resident, Persian Gulf, among inclosures to my letter of the 1st instant, for injunction issued to Sheikh. Wönckhaus must be exaggerating, as no instructions have been given in terms alleged by him.

"2. No Concession now exists, as I understand position, and it would seem better, having regard to German susceptibilities, that for some time to come no fresh Concession should be given. As soon as circumstances permit I recommend that we should introduce to the Sheikh a trustworthy British subject or firm who would manage, on suitable terms to be negotiated through the Residency, the mining and sales on Sheikh's behalf."

Our views will shortly be telegraphed. We are sending by this mail correspondence referred to in Major Cox' telegram.

[9029] No. 86.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 110.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March* 11, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 57 of the 5th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting further on his recent tour in his vilayet.

I have, &c.
(In the absence of the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 86.

Vice-Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2.)

Sir, *Van, January* 31, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a Report on my recent journey in the districts of the Shekak and Haideranli Kurds. I hope shortly to complete the maps I made on this journey, when I will forward them to your Excellency.

As this report touches on the Hamidieh question, which might be of interest to the military authorities, I would respectfully suggest that it may be passed on for their perusal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) BERTRAM DICKSON, *Captain, R.F.A.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 86.

Report on Journey through the Districts of Bashkala, Gawar, Urmi, Salmas, Kotur Serai, Arjish, Adeljivas, Melasgird, and Patnotz.

BETWEEN Van and Bashkala is the fertile district of Havatsor with many Armenian villages. This year the harvest had been good, and were it not for the amount of arrears of taxes they had had to pay in the spring, which compelled the villagers to sell their crops in advance and at a ridiculous price, they would have had a good year; as it is they are all hopelessly in debt with this "selem." Being on the main road to the frontier, they suffer a good deal from the continual passage of troops, who commandeer their services for transport, and force them to entertain them gratis.

Khoshab is the seat of a Kaimakam, Fuad Bey, who is generally supposed to be a harmless and incapable lunatic, who never leaves his harem. A Major of gendarmerie runs the Government, and succeeds fairly well, though there are one or two Kurd Aghas that are rather a thorn in the side of the numerous ryah Kurd and Armenian villagers; Hussein Agha of the Shemsiki is the worst of these. North of Khoshab are the Shemsiki and Milan asshirets. The latter are particularly strong; they are almost entirely pastoral tribes, though sedentary. South of Khoshab are the Shidan, a small and not very powerful tribe, also pastoral, but in the summer they go under tents on the hills of Nordnz.

To the east, on the other side of the high Chukh Dagh, are the Shekifti Meroki with the notorious Sherif Bey as their Chief. They occupy the upper basin of the Albak and around Bashkala. He has been well with the Government lately, and I understand that he has been employed by them to further their intrigues with the Persian Kurds. I fancy he is playing a double game, as he is also very friendly with the Fedai. There has not been any trade with Persia this year on account of the frontier troubles, so that Sherif Bey has not been able to exact his usual toll of pillage.

Bashkala has also suffered by the stoppage of the trade with Persia, and the price of all commodities in the district has enormously increased. Tahir Pasha and the rest

of the Turkish Commission for the frontier have made their head-quarters at Bashkala, where I found them waiting for the Persian Commission. The Mutessarif of Bashkala has just been appointed Vali of Van, and Hamzi Bey, the Commandant of Gendarmerie, has been acting for him at Bashkala. He has not been a success, and is generally detested on account of his incompetence and brutality.

There are many large rich ryah Kurd villages in the Albak Valley. They have suffered this year from the late spring and early winter (the snow came at least forty days earlier than usual), with dear seed and grasshoppers as well.

Between Bashkala and Gavvar is the large sedentary agricultural asshiret of the Pinianish; they are numerous, but not strong or rich, and are quiet and tractable, paying taxes and supplying their quota for military service. They complain a good deal of the ravages of the Persian Shekaks.

At Dizza, in the large fertile Plain of Gavvar, is a newly arrived Kaïmakam, a young and not too intelligent Turk from Constantinople. He has very little control over the turbulent tribes of Doshkhan and Oramar in the wild mountains south of Gavvar. Suto Agha, of Oramar, is the worst of these, and with about 200 armed followers he knows he can defy the Kaïmakam, who has only thirty zaptiehs at his disposal.

These Doshkhan Kurds have been having an intertribal war with the Kurds of the Agha of Chal, in which, from all accounts, the principal sufferers seem to be some Assyrian villages.

Between Gavvar and the Persian frontier is a large chain of mountains split up by numerous rich valleys, with a fair number of Assyrian and ryah Kurd villages. The Heriki nomads come here with their flocks in the summer. This year has been a disastrous one for the villagers, whose crops have been an entire failure. Usually they suffer severely from the depredations of the Somai Shekaks, but this year, owing to the occupation of the disputed district by the Turks and the presence of a squadron of cavalry at Bajirka, they have been immune.

The Sheikh of Shemsdinan owns a good deal of property in this neighbourhood, and his men, whom he sends to collect his rents, &c., bear an indifferent character.

I will pass on through the districts of Baradost, Tergaver, Berdesor, and Merguver, as I have already embodied all the information about them in my No. 23 of the 14th December, 1907.

The change one notices on going from Turkish to Persian rule is very striking, and at the same time interesting. In Turkey, the difficulties of the Eastern question and Armenian revolutionists have induced the Government to pursue a policy of oppression and almost of extermination towards the Christians, thus no Christian (with the exception of some few asshiret Assyrians in Tiari) is allowed to possess arms, with the result that they are totally unable to defend themselves or their property from the attacks of the Kurds. A long spell of this policy has reduced the Christians to a state of absolute destitution and misery, living from hand to mouth, having no inducement to work for more than will barely suffice to keep them alive and to pay the least possible amount of taxes, and when forced to pay more they have recourse to the pernicious system of "selem," the financial and economic ruin of nearly all Armenians. The result of all this is that a Christian village in Turkey is a collection of mud hovels, many of them empty or ruined (on account of massacres, or their owners having fled the country), which has more the appearance of a rabbit warren than a village; such things as gardens, orchards, or trees are rare, except in the vicinity of a large town, where the presence of European Consuls exerts a protecting influence. The people themselves are no better than a set of cringing beggars, ragged and filthy. Their houses are destitute of any sort of comforts, such as furniture, carpets, bedding, or food—in fact, one might well describe the Christian villages in this part of Turkey as the dens of the poorest of beggars. This applies to the Armenians and the ryah Assyrian. On passing over to Persian soil all this changes, the Persians not having the same fear of their small Christian population can afford to let them carry or possess arms, which enables them to protect themselves and their property, and gives them an incentive to work. Evidences of this are at once apparent in the shape of large well-built villages, with comfortable houses containing many luxuries, well-cultivated fields with gardens and orchards, groves of trees, and signs of prosperity on every hand. The Persian villages are, as a rule, larger than the Turkish ones, and are almost invariably fortified, generally being surrounded by a high wall. This is to enable them to withstand the raids of the border Kurds. In this part of Persia most of the richest villages are Assyrian, while round Salmas there are some few very prosperous Armenian ones. The people are altogether

superior to their brothers in Turkey, cleaner, more manly, better dressed, and seem to be harder workers. Many of the young men go into Russia and elsewhere to work, and return comparatively rich men, and this must influence the rest, bringing Western ideas and money into their midst, not to mention Western clothes and hats, and probably vices.

Throughout all the country I passed through, one or other of the two disturbing features of the last year had made themselves felt, and often both. I speak of the civil war between the Enjumen and the Shah's people, and the occupation by the Turks of the frontier districts. Last year, while the Enjumen movement was growing in Azerbaijan, it reached Khoi. This was displeasing to the Khan of Maku, a rich and powerful supporter of the Shah. The Enjumen, however, were too strong for him, and he had to fly, I am told, to Russia. In the spring he returned, and aided by the Aroxanli, Jellali, and Shekak Kurds, he raised a force of about 1,500 men, and marching on Khoi inflicted a severe defeat to the Enjumen force, after a battle lasting two days, at Zeyva, near Khoi; I am told some 500 Persians were killed. Since then a sort of peace has been patched up, in which the Khan of Maku is supposed to have accepted the idea of the Enjumen.

This civil war has divided up the frontier country round Khoi and Salmas. As far as I can gather, the Enjumen movement is principally confined to the towns, but those villages in the plains which have been drawn into the struggle have almost all sided with the Enjumen. Many of these villages are the personal property of the Shah or the Valiahd, and possibly this may be the reason they have sided against him, as giving them an excuse not to pay their rents, tithes, &c. Such of the asshiret Kurds on the border that have taken part in the struggle have been on the Shah's side, as giving them an excuse to descend *en masse* and pillage the rich villages in the plains. There are many ryah Kurd villages on the fringe between the mountains and the plains who, while not taking any personal interest in the struggle, have been made the chopping-block of both parties.

For example, Simco Agha, Chief of the Abouli Shekaks, and brother of the late Jaffer Agha, who was so traitorously murdered by the Persians at Tabreez in 1905. He was exiled from Persia, and, with his men, had since been living in Turkish territory near Van. He took advantage of the situation in the spring to join forces with the Khan of Maku, and played a great part in the victory at Zeyva. He has since been installed by the Khan of Maku (in the name of the Shah) as Governor of the district of Kotur. Here he levies the taxes for his own pocket, and to attain this he has billeted his men in the thirty odd villages of the district, where they live gratis on the fat of the land. Now, although a sort of patched-up peace exists between the two parties in the plains, the Kurds (I speak principally of Simco and his Shekaks) descend and pillage the various villages in the plains, giving as excuse, if any be needed, that the village is on the side of the Enjumen, and therefore rebel. On the other hand, the Salmas Enjumen having failed in their own attempts to make reprisals, have lately employed local Shekaks from Salmas to raid the villages occupied by Simco's men, giving as an excuse that the village is harbouring their enemies, when as likely as not the village in question took part with the Enjumen during the struggle. This was actually true in the case of the village of Zeri, two hours east of Kotur. Last October the Salmas Enjumen told them to expel Simco's men that were in their village; they replied that they could not, as they had only fifteen old flint-locks in the village. The Enjumen then sent the Mahmudie Shekaks to raid them, which they did, taking 2,500 sheep and 500 oxen, which they divided with the Salmas Enjumen. They raided the village of Esteran at the same time. I believe there are many similar cases to this; the Kurds, mostly Shekaks, making tremendous capital out of the situation, and plundering right and left. The Turks put this forward as an excuse for occupying the frontier territory, but as up to now they have not occupied Somai, the district from which these Shekaks come, the argument is weak. However, I have entered at length into this subject in my No. 23.

The district of Kotur, now held by Simco Agha, was given to Persia by the Treaty of Berlin, so that the Turks can have no claim on it. Nevertheless, they have been intriguing among the inhabitants, and from conversations that I have had with the Turkish staff officer in charge of this section of the frontier, I should not be surprised if, in the spring or summer, the Turks make the disturbed state of the country an excuse to occupy the districts of Salmas and Kotur. The Turks talk a great deal about the disturbed state of the frontier, and make the most of it, but I will say, without reserve, that the disturbance is fostered and aided by the Turks; many of the Kurd bands which

pillage the Persian villages coming over from Turkey, while, as far as I am aware, there has not been a single instance this year of Persian Kurds pillaging in Turkey. The Turks have a strong military cordon all along the frontier to prevent this, although, from what I heard on the Persian side, this cordon does not prevent the Turkish Kurds coming over. This cordon is in two sections:—

1. From Bayezid to Somai.
2. From Somai to Shemsdinan, with head-quarters at Bashkala.

Detachments of troops are stationed at every point on the frontier where a road or pass crosses it. They are placed there ostensibly to prevent smuggling, or parties of Kurds or Fedai from entering the country, but, thanks to the connivance of friendly Kurds, the Fedai pass pretty freely, I am informed.

In the Salmas Plain are several flourishing Armenian villages, whose inhabitants, being well armed, are able to hold their own with the Kurds, and are therefore left alone

Dilliman and Salmas are used as a base by the Fedai to pass arms and men into Turkey. They have a strong Committee there, of which one Muggerditch is the head. Formerly they were on bad terms with the neighbouring Kurds, but this year they have been the best of friends. Just before I passed through Dilliman, Abdullah Agha, son of Sherif Bey, Chief of the Shekifti and Colonel of Hamidieh, had been on a visit to this Muggerditch, and I am told that it is thanks to the aid of these Shekifti Hamidieh that the Fedai have been able to pass such quantities of arms and ammunition into Turkey that they are reported to have done.

I am told that the Fedai have a sort of standing army of about 100 Russian Armenians billeted about the villages in Salmas; these men are all well armed and ready for instant service.

While I was at Salmas things were quite quiet; the Governor, a new arrival, was still in office, though all his authority had been usurped by the Enjumen.

In the vicinity of Salmas are many remains of archæological interest. On a large rock near Meenas are some gigantic bas-reliefs and inscriptions of Sassanian origin, while in the mountains near to the ruined village of Hodar I found an extraordinary rock citadel, with huge rock chambers and dungeons and stone seats, similar to the Urartian ones at Van. Dotted about the plains are many huge mounds of ashes, the remains of the ancient fire worship, when the more wood a man burned the better time he had when he died. This also probably accounts for the deforestation of the surrounding hills.

At Kotur I found Simco Agha, whom I have mentioned above. He is a young man of 25, not bad looking for a Kurd, dark and greasy. He lives in state in the ruined mud castle of Kotur, where he has some fifty of his Shekaks armed to the teeth, and with their horses (the best I have come across in this country, and all looted from various Persian magnates) standing saddled night and day in the houses. He is a picturesque type of Kurd brigand, dressed in the height of Kurd fashion, with flowered silk petticoats, and 500 Mauser cartridges plastered about his tunic (no light weight). He is adored by his men, and is certainly quite the most sympathetic Kurd I have come across. The callous way in which he relates his various adventures—battles, murders, robberies, &c.—is rather fresh. He has captured two old brass Persian smooth-bore cannon, which he used to fire off during Ramazan in great style. It was most pathetic to see him with my rifle, which he took a great fancy to. While I was at Kotur he used to have it brought out every half-hour, and after inspecting it all over, he would kiss it and then look appealingly at me. He said that he would rather sleep with it than with his wife, which, considering that he had only been married a month, was rather unflattering for the lady.

From Kotur I passed to the Serai district, on the high Kurdestan plateau. This is the centre of the Milan, Mukuri, Takuri, and Shemsiki sections of the Shekak asshiret. The asshiret Kurds in the north of the Van Vilayet are divided into two great families, the Haideranli and the Shekaks, who have always been natural enemies. The Shekaks are divided into Milan, Mukuri, Takuri, Shemsiki, Shekifti, Shevili, and Livili, and occupy the ground east of the lake to over the Persian frontier, where there are various other sections of Persian Shekaks right down to Somai. Each of the above sections supplies a regiment of Hamidieh. They are not generally on the best of terms with each other, although at present, with the exception of the Mukuri and Takuri, they are friendly.

Serai is the seat of a Kaïmakam, Reschid Bey, an old man who has been a Kaïmakam in this vilayet for thirty years. I am informed that he is an honest official,

but has little or no power over the powerful Hamidieh Chiefs in his kaza. The country round Serai is composed of undulating grassy hills and large, open, flat marshy plains, excellent for agriculture. These are badly cultivated by the Kurds, and further west, down the Kara Su Valley, by some Yezidi and Assyrian villages. The Kurds, in addition, own large flocks of sheep. All these Kurds are sedentary. North of Serai there are many ruined villages, the result of the invasion of Tahir Bey with his Persian Haideranli five years ago. The country is fertile, but nothing like the best is made of it by the Kurds.

Serai town is a wretched mud hut affair, with a few Assyrian and Armenian traders. It suffered severely last spring from an earthquake, which destroyed all the buildings. There is a Customs post, but since this last year all the trade with Persia has stopped. Serai is the head-quarters for the Milan, Mukuri, Takuri, and Shemsiki Hamidieh regiments, and the regular officers attached to these regiments are stationed there. There is a barracks, with the head-quarters of a battalion of infantry. Most of the Kurd chiefs have houses in the town, where they often come in the winter.

Although their Chiefs are rich and have enormous flocks of sheep, the rank and file of these asshiret Kurds are poor, and they complain a good deal that their Chiefs take everything from them, and they certainly look poor, but as they work as little as possible they cannot get rich honestly, while if they want to rob they have to go a long distance to do so (there are no Christian villages in this district). This entails going in a large party, and then the Chief generally takes the best part of the loot.

All the Shekak tribes, with the exception of the Shevili, are for the moment on friendly terms with the Fedai, who pay them to be allowed to pass to and fro in their country. The reason for this friendliness is principally on account of Ali Bey, the late Vali, who made himself unpopular with the Kurds by trying to collect in full the sheep tax.

The Hamidieh movement has had a tremendous effect on these Kurds. Before they were formed into Hamidieh, with the exception of some very few tribes, they were wretched creatures, I am told—poor, ignorant, unarmed—with no power and in great fear of the Government, which used to treat them like dirt. Then came the idea of making them into irregular cavalry, and their Chiefs were made Beys, Pashas, and Colonels, &c., decorated by the Sultan, given uniforms, guns, pay, and many privileges, amongst the biggest being their immunity from punishment by the Civil Government, and more or less a free licence to rob and pillage the Christian villages. Thus the Kurds see their Chiefs promoted and decorated, and allowed to do as they like and defy the civil power, and this in most cases has only served to increase the Kurd's opinion of his Chief and himself at the expense of the Government. In some instances the Chiefs curry favour with the Mushir at Erzingan, talk a great deal about their loyalty and devotion to the Sultan, who has made them what they are, &c.; but these are generally the worst characters, and the ones who rob and pillage the most, like Hussein Pasha. The smaller Chiefs and the rank and file have no loyalty whatever, and look on enlistment in the Hamidieh simply as a means of getting a rifle and permission to rob.

It seems to me that many of these Hamidieh Chiefs are quite different to the non-Hamidieh Kurds. They have a slight veneer of civilization, aping the Turk in his worst qualities; they are entirely deficient in military instincts or tastes, and their only interest in things military is the importance that the rank gives them. They seem to have entirely lost the national traits of the Kurd, who, although quite savages and ignorant, are more manly and freer, and certainly more hospitable and companionable.

The Hamidieh Chiefs seem to occupy themselves in building fine houses (for this country) in their numerous villages for their numerous wives, and in amassing wealth by trade and commerce in sheep and trafficking with tithes, employing Armenian secretaries and agents for this purpose. The impression I gathered from them was, that while the non-Hamidieh were generally rough, uncivilized barbarians, living together more or less as a family, and caring very little for the law or Government; among the Hamidieh Kurds the Chiefs are paramount, and are a sort of glorified merchants, buying favour and protection from the Government and Mushir at Erzingan, while their men are nothing more than their servants, and wretched ones at that. The officers of the Hamidieh receive half the pay of officers in the regular army; the rank and file receive nothing. They do nothing for this, and although they are supposed to do a certain amount of training each year, they have never done so, as the cost would be too great. Thus, although the rough material for a force is there, it is quite untested, and personally I should much doubt it being of much use in case of war. They have few horses, and such

as they have (with few exceptions) are bad; while, unlike the Turks, they have no idea of discipline, are very stupid, lazy, unenterprising, unenergetic, and unsporting, and, in fact, have none of the qualities which usually go to make up good irregular cavalry.

At the present moment the question among them is the chance of war with Russia. They have been warned to be prepared to mobilize at a moment's notice, and this naturally makes them wonder whom they may have to fight. Their information on current topics is extremely slight and vague, but they all seem convinced that if there is any war at all that it must be with Russia, and although one or two of the more intelligent realize what a war with Russia will mean to them, and do not desire it, the majority fancy that Russia, having been beaten by Japan, a tribe of savages they had never even heard of before, Russia must be very weak, and they (the Kurds) would have an easy time of plundering, &c.

Those regiments of Hamidieh immediately on the frontier have had rifles and 100 rounds per man issued to them, while their Colonels have a small reserve store of ammunition. This has been done with the idea that they should act as a sort of frontier guard.

The Milan occupy the country round Satmanis, between Serai and Khoshab. Mehmed Bey, their Chief, is perhaps the most powerful of all the Shekak tribes in Turkey; he has under him about 1,200 armed men. Besides his own tribe, he is the acknowledged head of the Persian tribe of Aroxanli or Aroshi, of whom many come over into Turkey and are settled by Mehmed Bey in various Christian villages in the district, where they live gratis on the fat of the land, and in return act as a sort of guard to prevent other Kurds from pillaging the villages. This seems a sort of custom that has grown up among the Christian villages in this part of the vilayet, and the villagers themselves prefer it to the incessant pilfering and pillage to which they were formerly submitted.

The Milan have not the best of reputations for honesty, and, in fact, there seems to be little doubt that it was Mehmet Bey's people that stole the sheep of the American Mission at Van two years ago; but, being a powerful Hamidieh Colonel, the Government will not admit it, and deny that the sheep have been able to be traced. He has many similar cases of raiding against him, and the late Ali Bey tried to get the Mushir to punish him, but nothing came of it.

The Takuri occupy a high plateau of good agricultural land north of Serai, on the Persian frontier, and on the edge of the Haideranli country of Mustafa Bey, who is their *bête noire*. They suffered severely from the invasion of Tahir Khan and his Persian Haideranli five years ago, though, thanks to the assistance of the other Shekak tribes and some regular troops, they were able to repulse them with great slaughter.

Hussein Bey, of Akhorik, is a good type of the Hamidieh Colonel I alluded to above. He is the Chief of the Takuri, and is very rich, while his tribe is comparatively poor. He dresses himself in a splendid fancy uniform covered with gold lace, astrachan, and silver buttons, with many different coloured flowered silk petticoats, and he gushes about the Sultan who has made him the enlightened magnate that he is. He is busy building mud palaces in various villages, while the lesser Aghas of his tribe are quite poor, and make no pretence to hide their dislike of the Sultan and the Turks. Djendi Agha, a Major in the Takuri Hamidieh, is on bad terms with Hussein Bey, who is his uncle, and who lately had Djendi's two sons killed. The Takuri have about 800 armed men.

The Mukuri asshiret occupy the ground west of the Takuri, on the west of the Serai Plain and the upper basin of the Marmid Chai. They number about 500 armed men. They are not a rich tribe, but as they bear a fairly good reputation for quietness this is natural. Their Chief is Nejib Agha, a cousin of Simeu Agha; he lives at Tumrek, west of Serai, and seems a quiet, inoffensive sort of man; his brother, Aziz Khan Agha, of Memedahan, is more intelligent. Ali Agha, of Kubsheyr, a large village of some 200 houses, is one of the most intelligent and sympathetic Kurds about here, he is a Major of Hamidieh, but is very unwarlike, and fully realizes what a ridiculous force the Hamidieh is. As a Bachi-Bozouk he took part in the operations around Bayazid during the last Russian war, and told me that their sufferings were bad enough then, but that now they would be worse, as there were no villages and no provisions in the country in comparison to what there was then. In the upper basin of the Marmid Chai are several villages of Yezidi, who are in a bad way. Formerly they were well off, but since the formation of the Hamidieh they have been unable to hold their own with the Kurds and the Government. Their colony is in the Serai Kaza, and as there are no Christian villages in this Liza for the Government to bleed, the Yezidi have to take

their place. They are as poor and wretched as any Armenians, and they get no sympathy or help from any one.

West of this Yezidi colony are several Assyrian villages with a sprinkling of Armenian. These are in the nahie of Archag, where the Mudir, Kiamil Effendi, has a good reputation for honesty and justice. Most of these villages were deserted at the time of the massacres, and were taken possession of by various Kurds, and now in every village there are complications, as the Christians have gradually come back and are trying to get rid of the Kurd intruders. The Government, and especially the late Ali Bey, seem to take the part of the Christians more than one would have expected, though they make their lot hard by asking them to pay arrears of taxes for the years that they were away. As in most cases the poor outcasts were living from hand to mouth, begging in Van, or working as servants gratis in some Kurd village, it is hard to expect them to pay taxes for this time when they were earning nothing, and their land was in the possession of Kurds who did not pay anything. All these villages have a few Kurd families (mostly Persian emigrants of the Milan tribe) living with them to protect them. One village, Haspishad, on the north shore of Lake Archag, belonging to Reghoub Effendi, a rich Turk of Van, was raided recently by some of the Shivili Kurds, who killed his watchman. Reghoub Effendi is an influential Turk, and was till recently an employé of the Government, but even he can get no redress against these Hamidieh, and has since become a convert to the Young Turk party. All round Lake Archag are several Armenian and Assyrian villages, whose condition seems to be rather better than that of most of their compatriots.

The Shevili asshiret occupy the Tinar district on the east shore of Lake Van, north of Van; they number about 500 armed men, and are a rich tribe. Their late Chief, Jaffer Bey, died some five years ago, and his brother, Kiamil Bey, at the time a sergeant in the Hamidieh, was made Chief of the tribe by Tahir Pasha; his appointment as Colonel of Hamidieh has not yet been officially ratified by the Sultan. He lives at Turkishkhan, and is very rich. For a Kurd he is educated and enlightened; he can read and write Turkish. He was a great favourite with Tahir Pasha. He is the only Kurd Chief about here who takes an active part against the Fedai, with whom his men have had frequent encounters, and who have threatened to assassinate him. His domestic troubles are rather typical of Kurd life; his brother's widow being very rich and very beautiful he wishes to marry her, and would have done so long ago only that she is a sister of one of his own wives, and the Moslem law forbids it. He has enlisted all the religious authorities in the district to try and find a means out of the difficulty, but to no effect; for some reason he cannot divorce his present wife, so he has to wait till she dies to attain his desire. The present wife fully appreciates the delicacy of her position, and for the last two years she has lived entirely on eggs which she cooks herself, and water which she drinks from the stream.

The Fedai had a depôt of ammunition in a hill above the village of Kabedek, on the border of the Shevili country. Last autumn an Armenian of Van betrayed to Kiamil Bey the whereabouts of this depôt. Kiamil Bey's men surprised it and captured most of the store, which included a considerable quantity of dynamite (probably destined to blow up the late Ali Bey). When I was at Turkishkhan he showed me some of it, and asked me what it was, as they were under the impression that it was smokeless powder, and were loading their cartridges with it.

On the north-east shore of the lake, between Arjish and Bergri, on a small and not very fertile strip of land, are the Divili asshiret. They are a section of the Shekak, and emigrated from Persia some sixty years ago, when they were settled here by the Turkish Government. They are weak and poor, have only six villages and some 300 men, and practically no horses. They are much oppressed by their neighbours in the north, the Haideranli and the Kalkanli of Ali Bey, who have taken a lot of their land from them, and who come in large bands and claim their hospitality, which does not much differ from pillage. Koshkhan Bey of Arais, their Chief, a quiet, decent fellow, told me that, although there is no open rupture between them and the Haideranli if it were not for the protection that Kiamil Bey and his Shevili afforded him he would be pushed right into the lake by the Haideranli.

The Haideranli occupy the country north of Lake Van to over the Persian frontier, where there are also Persian Haideranli. They supply eight regiments of Hamidieh, with head-quarters at Bergri, Arjish, and Karakilisen. They may be divided more or less into three sections, those in the east of the Melasgird Plain and around Patnoz with Hussein Pasha their Chief, those round Arjish with Emin Pasha as Chief, and those in the Abagha Plain and Bergri with Mehmed Bey and Mustafa Bey as Chiefs. These sections are frequently at war with each other.

The Haideranli are quite a distinct race to the Shekak, and their characteristics are considerably worse: they are very quarrelsome, uncivilized, boorish, rude, and awful thieves and bullies, and they lack the only virtue that Kurds generally possess, which is hospitality. A Haideranli Chief who owns thousands of sheep will think a long time before he will order a chicken (market value 3*d.*) to be killed in honour of a distinguished guest. They are a large tribe, numbering some 5,000 armed men; they are divided into numerous small sections which, though more compact than the Shekaks, are continually at war with one another. They are hated cordially by every one—Turks, Christains, and other Kurds. They are on bad terms with the Shekaks, their natural enemies, and with the Hassananli to the west, though for the moment they are friendly with Sippikanli, Zillanli, and Jelladi to the north.

On the northern shore of Lake Van the climate is mild and the soil is very fertile; here formerly there were many large and flourishing villages. During the massacres these suffered severely at the hands of the Haideranli; many villages were entirely deserted, and others partially. Hussein Pasha and Emin Pasha profited by the occasion to take possession of these deserted villages and lands, and have thus enormously increased their wealth and power. At the present some of these villages are entirely occupied by the Kurds of these Chiefs, while others are occupied by Armenians who work the soil, while Hussein or Emin Pasha, as the case may be, have some families of their Kurds living gratis in the village to act as their agents and task-masters, as the position of the Armenians is little better than that of slaves. The land having been appropriated by these Kurds, they give the seed to the Armenians, who have to do the work and are supposed to receive half the crop as their share, but as the Armenians have to pay tithes and taxes out of their half, and it is the Kurds that receive these (on account of their being Hamidieh), one can easily imagine that the Armenians do not get fat on what is left. As I mentioned above, the Haideranli are bullies, and the district is studded with small piles of stones to mark where various Armenians have been killed by Hussein Pasha's men when on their way to make complaints to the Government.

Hussein Pasha has had large sheep stables constructed in most of these villages by the Armenians, and during the winter he sends his flocks with their shepherds, and the villagers have to feed both gratis through the winter.

Besides these villages that are formed by Hussein and Emin Pashas, there are several that are still deserted—one, Akserai, had some 700 houses; the former Armenian occupants are dispersed all over the place, some in America, some in Russia and Persia, while a large number act as servants in the Haideranli villages, working in the fields and receiving in return board, lodging, and protection. Lately the Governm it has begun to realize that they are losing a lot in taxes by these villages being uninhabited and the ground not being cultivated, so this last year the late Ali Bey ordered steps to be taken to bring back these Armenians to their villages; this has not succeeded so far, and very few have returned. I understand that the majority prefer the serf's life they are leading with the Kurds to the incessant persecution and oppression they would probably have to put up with if they returned to their villages. A large number of these Armenians are in the Abagha and Bergri districts. Previous to last year the Government did not collect the taxes in those districts in the usual way, but sold them to the Chiefs, who used to pay a fixed sum. This last year Ali Bey tried to collect the taxes himself, and for this purpose sent officials to assess the sheep; they were not very successful, as the Kurds sent their sheep over the Persian border or to other villages while the assessors were about. In spite of this they managed to collect a little more money than in previous years, although these Kurds do not pay one-tenth of the sheep-tax they should. In the collection of the tithe I am told they were more successful.

Last July Hussein and Emin Pasha were at war with each other. It appears that there was some dispute as to whom belonged the village of Dumbet, near to Patnoz, which was actually occupied by Emin Pasha's men. After a certain amount of hard fighting, which lasted some days, both parties brought up more men, and Hussein Pasha's party attacked Kamishvan, but were repulsed with seventeen killed and forty wounded, the casualties including several officers of Hamidieh. Jevdet Bey, the Kaïmakam of Arjish, then arrived with a force of zaptiehs and regular troops, and tried to stop them, at first without success. I am informed that Hussein Pasha, who had been strongly reinforced in the meanwhile, offered Jevdet Bey 2,000*l.* to be left alone to polish off Emin Pasha. Eventually the fighting was stopped on the receipt of urgent telegrams from Zekki Pasha, the Mushir at Erzingan, threatening them both with all sorts of penalties. Emin Pasha, although he had repulsed Hussein, had to give up six villages (all Armenian ones) as blood money. They are now the best of friends for the moment, and were touring the country together this autumn. Hussein Pasha

has four wives, and he has built a splendid house for each in different Armenian villages, and he passes the time visiting them in turn.

North of the Shevili, in the Abagha Plain and Bergri, are two sections of Haideranli with their Chiefs, Mustata Bey of Nazurawa and Mehmed Bey of Kutchan. Each of these is a Colonel of Hamidieh, although Mustafa's regiment does not exist. He brought Haideranli from Persia so as to form it, but the Government said that, being emigrants, they must conform to the rule and settle twenty-four hours' distance from the frontier; this did not suit Mustafa, so they returned to Persia.

Bergri is the chief town of the Bergri nahie, and is a wretched mud village with the ruins of an important Byzantine fortress on a rock overhanging the Bendimahi River. The inhabitants are principally Haideranli, and dislike the expense of entertaining the various Kurds that come from time to time to see the Mudir on business, so they have petitioned the Vali to have the seat of Government changed to Kordzot, which is an Armenian village. This is most characteristic of the Haideranli, who, the most inhospitable people themselves, are always sponging on their neighbours; if any strangers come to a Haideranli village where there are some Armenian houses they are always lodged with the Armenians.

Arjish is an important town, and the seat of a Kaïmakam, Jevdet Bey, the son of Tahir Pasha, whom he is at present accompanying in Persia as a sort of assistant on the Frontier Commission. Arjish is the centre of a rich agricultural district formed by the delta of the Zillan Su. The post and caravan route from Van to Erziroum passes here. Its vines and fruits are noted in the district. Arjish at one time must have been a large and important city, and was the capital of one of the Armenian kings: the Armenian histories say that at its sack (some thousand years ago) 40,000 Armenians were killed. The ruins of the ancient city are to be seen on the shores of the lake, where they were submerged some sixty years ago. There is a certain amount of trade with Van by the lake, principally in corn from the rich surrounding district. Arjish is the principal market for the Haideranli, and many of their Chiefs possess houses in the town. It is also the head-quarters for five regiments of Hamidieh, while there are also two squadrons of regular cavalry and some infantry stationed there.

The present Kaïmakam, Jevdet Bey, has been a great success here. It is a difficult post to hold, on account of the powerful Kurds, Hussein and Emin Pashas. He is equally liked by the Turks (of whom there are a good number in the vicinity of the town) and Armenians, and detested by the Kurds, on account of his firmness, honesty, and justice. I heard that he had frequently managed to get the Kurds punished, through the military authorities in Arjish, though, of course, only the lesser fry; the big Chiefs, the principal offenders, being too powerful.

Between Arjish and Adeljivas, on the fertile northern shore of the lake, and the foot of the slopes of the enormous volcano of Sephan Dagh, there are several large Armenian villages, in nearly every one of which is a large house belonging to either Hussein or Emin Pasha, and large sheep sheds for wintering their sheep.

Adeljivas is the centre of a kaza, with Tahsin Bey as Kaïmakam. He is a young, well-meaning, easy-going Turk, but has little power outside the town, where Hussein Pasha is supreme. Adeljivas is a mud hut town on the ruins of a once fine stone Byzantine and Seljuk city, the ruins of which are partly submerged in the lake. It is principally important as the port for the trade between Van and Trebizond, while in addition a large quantity of corn from Tutamus and Melasgird are shipped from here to various parts of the lake, principaly to Van. There is a fair number of Turks in the neighbourhood of Arjish and Adeljivas, and this last year the Moslem revolutionary party have been making efforts to gain their support, for which purpose, I am informed, various emissaries have been sent from Erzeroum.

The Armenian Fedai do not flourish among the villages on the north shore of the lake, I believe they find the Haideranli too much for them, but lately they also have recommenced action, and various propagandists have been visiting their villages.

In the undulating hills about Adeljivas, Akhlat, and Melasgird, are several villages of Circassians, most of whom have been settled there since the last Russo-Turkish war, and are now pretty comfortably installed. They are a great improvement on the Kurds, whom they cordially despise. Their villages are cleaner, better built, and the houses detached. I found them extremely hospitable, intelligent, and, to a certain extent, educated. The Mushir Zekki Pasha, himself a Circassian, is their patron and protector, and from various stories I heard, he looks after them well. Even the great Hussein Pasha got into trouble this last year for threatening to ill-treat the Circassians of Hussein Bey of Yaramish. They pay their taxes, but only to the authorized tassilims, and will not allow zaptiehs into their villages. They are well armed, well dressed, smart,

and clean, and are much feared by the neighbouring Kurds, who, though far more numerous, leave them severely alone. They occupy themselves principally with horse breeding and sheep trading, buying the sheep from the Kurds and selling at Bitlis, Erzeroum, &c. They can travel about the country fearlessly, where the Kurds do not dare to leave their own dunghills. They employ Armenians to cultivate their lands. They do not at present supply recruits for military service.

North of Adeljivas and around Melasgird the large tribe of Hassananli commences. From what I saw of them, and from all accounts, they are much the same type as the Haideranli, or even worse characters, as the Bitlis Government seem to give them a free hand to do what they like with the Armenians in the Akhlat, Bidanuk, and Moush districts, while they are equally quarrelsome amongst themselves. Akhveran, a large village of Hassananli, 10 miles south of Melasgird, belongs to Fatullah Bey, Kaimakam of Hamidieh, who lives at Melasgird. Recently the people of Akhveran killed his son, and so he has entirely destroyed the village of some 200 houses and his own property.

Melasgird is the centre of a kaza of the Bitlis Vilayet, and is the head-quarters of the Hassananli Hamidieh, who are supreme in the district. Round the town are many ruins of former Byzantine, Seljuk, and Armenian grandeur, the Turks and Kurds of the present time are content with filthy mud hovels. The Melasgird plain and valley is fertile, and there are numerous villages in it, mostly Kurd. South-east of Melasgird is a vast lava bed of spongy rock from Sephan Dagh, which is waterless (the water from Sephan would seem to sink through), and therefore uninhabited, but in the spring, when the snows melt, it is covered with rich grass, and the Kurds come and camp on it with their flocks until the water disappears. At the north of this lava bed, where it comes on the Kara Su, are innumerable large springs, evidently the drain from Sephan, these are employed to work a large number of corn mills, which make the district noted for its flour.

The basin of the Kara Su is Hussein Pasha's country, and is a rich agricultural district, although the Kurds do not take anything like as much advantage of it as they might. There are numbers of Haideranli villages scattered about everywhere, and at each one they seem to be more uncivil than the last one. They trust each other so little that they are obliged to go about incessantly armed to the teeth.

At Sultanmud, a large village on the edge of the lava bed, there is a colony of Kurds from Karchigan, south of Lake Van, who came and settled here some eighty years ago. They are rich and comfortable, occupying themselves with agriculture, and get on very fairly well with the Haideranli. They supply a squadron of Hamidieh, commanded by their Chief, Sadig Bey, to the Hassananli regiment of Fatullah Bey of Melasgird.

Patnoz is Hussein Pasha's principal village, though, not having a wife there, he does not favour it very much. His son Abdullah is installed there, a youth of about 22, who seems to be rather wanting in intelligence, which may account for his not being enrolled in the Hamidieh. I found Hussein Pasha at Patnoz, where he was entertaining a large company of Hamidieh Chiefs of the Sipikanli, Zillani, and Karapapaks. They had been hawking and hunting partridges, and to meet such a lot of important Chiefs together was rather an opportunity.

Even for a Kurd, Hussein Pasha is an unsympathetic type. Large, fat, flabby, sensual looking, and untidy; he displays no intelligence or interest in anything, and gave more the impression of a German Jew in the city than of a brigand chief and commander of a brigade of irregular cavalry. Certainly his instincts are more Jewish than military, and he is the first Kurd that never asked to see my guns. He is reputed to possess 30,000 sheep, though he naïvely told me that he had nearly 3,000, and that is what his sheep tax is assessed at. He is not at all pleased at the prospect of mobilization and war (he had some experience in the Yemen, which he did not appreciate), and is altogether unmartial and infinitely prefers peace soldiering. He dislikes the civil authorities, saying they do not understand how to treat the Kurds (*i.e.*, to leave them alone to do what they like). He and Emin Pasha have made a tremendous corner of the corn of this district. This is especially hard at the present time on account of the poverty in the country, as also for the partial failure of the crops this year all over the country. The consequence is that the price of corn has mounted to an unheard of price. The civil authorities can do nothing, as these Hamidieh Chiefs have some agreement with the military authorities to keep a permanent store of corn for military purposes in case of war, and for this reason they are given most of the privileges and facilities they have to amass the corn. I believe the Vali tried to prevent the tithes being sold to these Kurds, but that an order came from the Palace to allow the Kurds to have them.

So long as the Sultan and the Palace pamper and protect the Hamidieh, and allow them to go on in the way they do, so long will this retrograde race and idiotic force continue to ruin a beautiful country, whose numerous ruins show that even in barbaric ages it was capable of producing flourishing nations and fine cities, rich with magnificent buildings and fortresses.

There is no doubt, as evidenced on every side, that since the Hamidieh movement has been in force the country has been getting poorer and poorer each year, and is continuing to do so. If the Palace officials are under the impression that the Hamidieh is a menace to Russia in its present form, or that it is going to be of any use to them in a future war, I think that they would very soon have this idea dispelled were they to come and live among the Kurds for a few months as impartial spectators.

(Signed) BERTRAM DICKSON,
Captain, R.F.A.

[9206] No. 87.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 77.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, March 16, 1908.*

His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire has addressed to me the following telegram dated the 15th instant:—

"Protection of Bahreinis.

"The Residency Agent reports that the Deputy-Governor of Lingah has fined, flogged, and imprisoned a Bahreini, and refuses to admit the right of our Agent to intervene in behalf of any subject of Bahrein. This Deputy Governor is a puppet of the Russian Agent and of the individual who styles himself 'Turkish Agent.'

"My authority as Resident for the Arab coast is being weakened by my failure fully to protect Bahreinis.

"Please recommend His Majesty's Government to authorize insistence on our right to do so."

The Russian and Turkish Agents act pretty well independently of their Legations.

Could you not authorize moderate local action by Cox? I suggest this course, as action here would, I fear, be without effect.

[8649] No. 88.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 16, 1908.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, inclosing telegraphic correspondence on the subject of the Red Oxide Concession on the Island of Abu Musa.

I am to state, in reply, that Sir E. Grey observes that no suggestion is made in the telegram from the Resident in the Persian Gulf as to whether some temporary arrangement might not suitably be made for supplying Messrs. Wönckhaus with a limited amount of red oxide pending the settlement of the subject in dispute, and without prejudice to the decision which may be arrived at. As you are aware, this question was raised in my letter of the 28th December, and in view of the large claim for damages which, with the continued lapse of time, would lie against the Government of India in the event of Messrs. Wönckhaus' case being upheld, I am to suggest that an early decision on the point in question would be highly expedient.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[9247] No. 89.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received March* 17, 1908.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 15th March, relative to the Muscat Arbitration Award.

India Office, March 16, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 89.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *March* 15, 1908.

YOUR telegram dated the 9th January: Muscat Award. See correspondence forwarded with weekly letter, dated the 5th instant, from Secretary, Foreign Department. We approve Major Grey's settlement, as shown therein. We should be glad if orders as to issue of Sultan's Proclamation could be telegraphed to us.

[9203] No. 90.

Foreign Office to India Office.[*]

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 17, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 7th February, 1906, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, the accompanying copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran reporting the ill-treatment of a native of Bahrein by the Deputy Governor of Lingah.

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that the serious attention of the Persian Government should be called to the arbitrary action of this official, and he would suggest, for the consideration of Mr. Secretary Morley, that, in view of the shadowy nature of the authority exercised by the Persian Government in the region in question, it would be expedient to adopt locally some measures of a suitable character, and that Major Cox should be asked by telegraph for his views of what action he could successfully take to vindicate the special position of His Majesty's Government in relation to the Island of Bahrein.

The draft of a telegram which Sir E. Grey proposes, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Morley, to send to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, is transmitted herewith.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

Inclosure in No. 90.

Draft of Telegram from Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

Foreign Office, March , 1908.

YOUR telegram No. 77.

You should formally bring facts to the notice of the Persian Government, and protest against action of Government of Lingah in arbitrarily punishing a British protected subject of Bahrein, and in refusing good offices of British Resident.

I am suggesting to the India Office that Major Cox should be asked by telegraph for his views of what action he could successfully take to vindicate our position.

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[*] No. 87.

[9404] No. 91.

Supplementary Memorandum respecting British Interests in the Persian Gulf.

[See Confidential Paper No. 9161.]

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The Arms Traffic.

(Communicated by the India Office.)

THE position in regard to the arms traffic on the various sections of the Persian Gulf littoral is briefly as follows:—

1. *Muscat.*—Muscat has for many years been an emporium for the arms traffic, and the trade has now attained to such dimensions that in 1906–7 the total value of the imports of arms and ammunition amounted to 112,338*l.* The situation is governed by the fact that the Sultan of Muscat has Commercial Treaties with France, Holland, and the United States, under the terms of which it would be impossible for him to impose special restrictions on the importation of arms and ammunition into his dominions without the consent of the Powers in question.

The result is that arms flow freely into Muscat, and are thence distributed throughout Persia, Arabia, and Afghanistan. From the last-named country a considerable proportion of the arms find their way to the tribesmen of the Indian North-West Frontier, with results which have been described by the Government of India as "constituting a grave menace to the peace of the border." To such an alarming extent has this process been going on that in February 1907 the Government of India estimated that out of the 270,000 men belonging to the frontier tribes no less than 94,000 possessed breech-loading rifled arms.

The view is pretty generally held that, until Muscat is closed to the importation of arms it will be impossible to place any effective check on the export trade by native *dhows* to other ports on the Gulf littoral.

The total number of rifles imported from Great Britain into Muscat reached 13,831 in the year 1900. During the two following years there was a marked decline, but in 1904–5 the total number of imported rifles was believed to be not less than 20,000. Recent figures point to a still more remarkable increase, and the custom-house returns show that, during the quarter ending the 30th September, 1907, some 10,000 rifles and 7,000,000 cartridges were shipped from the United Kingdom to Muscat. Besides the imports from this country there is known to be a considerable trade with the port of Marseilles. The Government of India calculated in February 1907 that, whereas in 1899–1900 only about one-seventh of the imports were from France, by 1905 the proportion of French arms had risen to two-fifths. M. Goguyer, a local French merchant, who has from time to time lent large sums of money to the Sultan, is known to be deeply involved in the arms traffic. Another French merchant, M. Carcalla, was reported in July 1906 to have arrived at Muscat, with the apparent intention of taking part in the trade. In the returns for 1906–7 Belgium appears for the first time as an importer of arms into Muscat, though it is believed that rifles of Belgian manufacture have for many years past been imported in considerable numbers.

In 1897 the Government of India determined to make an effort to check the arms traffic at Muscat, and, accordingly, in January 1898 joint representations were made to the Sultan by the British and Persian Governments, urging him to co-operate in the suppression of the traffic. His Highness fell in with the suggestion, and on the 13th January of that year issued (1) a Notification warning his subjects that the importation of arms and ammunition into India and Persia was illegal; and (2) a Proclamation authorizing British and Persian vessels of war to search, within Muscat territorial waters, vessels carrying the British, Persian, or Muscat flag, as well

Government of India's letter of February 21, 1907.

India Office to Foreign Office, November 26, 1907.

Government of India's letter of February 10, 1898.

as Muscat vessels in Indian and Persian waters, and to confiscate arms and ammunition intended for Indian and Persian ports.

The right of search does not extend to the vessels of other nations, and, as has been stated above, the terms of his Commercial Treaties render it impossible for the Sultan, without the consent of the Treaty Powers, to impose any general restriction on the import of arms into Muscat.

In the same year, 1898, with a view to imposing a further check on the arms traffic in Oman, rules were issued requiring all British subjects possessing arms within the Sultan's territory to register the same at the British Consulate. It may be doubted, however, whether this measure has done more than throw the trade to an increasing extent into foreign hands. In the same way it seems not unlikely that the action recently taken by the British India Steam Navigation Company to check the smuggling of arms in small quantities by the Company's steamers in the Gulf may only result in diverting traffic of this kind to vessels which are not placed under such restrictions.*

India Office to Foreign Office, October 19, 1898.

It may be added that the import of arms at Gwadur, the Sultan of Muscat's dependency on the Mekran coast, was prohibited by a Proclamation issued by His Highness on the 3rd March, 1891.

Government of India's letter of March 31, 1904.

In March 1904, the Government of India proposed that the terms of the Muscat Proclamation of 1898 should be extended so as to cover the export of arms to Turkish ports, and to the territories of the Sheikhs of Bahrein and Koweit, and of the Trucial Chiefs, as well as to "Indian and Persian" ports, which already fell within the scope of the Proclamation. This proposal was not carried into effect, it being at the time held undesirable, in view of the Sheikh's position in regard to the warfare in Central Arabia,* to impose any fresh restrictions on the importation of arms at Koweit. The necessary arrangements with Turkey also presented some difficulty.

Mr. Brodrick's telegram of June 24, 1903.

The Government of India have also from time to time recommended—

(1.) That the French Government should be approached with a view to their being induced to agree to the total prohibition of the arms traffic at Muscat; and

(2.) That the Porte should be asked to agree to our patrolling the Turkish littoral against arms smugglers, or at least to declare the illegality of the traffic.

Government of India's letter of February 21, 1907.

Neither of these suggestions has hitherto borne fruit. The question was passed in review by the Government of India as recently as February 1907, and the conclusion at which they arrived, after a careful and detailed examination of the case, was that the arms traffic would continue to flourish and increase until an Agreement with France was arrived at, and a complete prohibition was enforced against the importation of arms and ammunition into the territories of the Sultan of Muscat. The whole question will come up for discussion at the forthcoming International Conference at Brussels.

Under the Brussels Act of 1890 for regulating the traffic in arms, any one of the Signatory Powers that has occasion to authorize such traffic in territories of its own lying within the region affected by the provisions of the Act, is required to establish a "public warehouse," under the control of its local Administration, in which all imported arms must be deposited, and from which they may not be withdrawn without the previous authorization of the Administration.

There seems no hope of obtaining the consent of France, and the other Powers having Treaty relations with Muscat, to the Sultan's prohibiting, *proprio motu*, the import of arms into his dominions. The only remedy for the present evil would, therefore, appear to be to bring Muscat, at the forthcoming Conference, within the scope of the Brussels Act of 1890, and to enforce there the provisions requiring the establishment of a warehouse under proper supervision.

If this is done, two questions will arise:—

(*a.*) What inducement shall be offered to the Sultan, a Sovereign whose independence has been guaranteed by Great Britain and France, to accept restrictions on a traffic amounting to 112,338*l.*† per annum, and yielding a customs revenue of 5,617*l.* per annum?

(*b.*) How will it be possible to provide efficient machinery for carrying out the provisions of the Act, without admitting a system of international control inconsistent with the maintenance of the present political predominance of Great Britain?

* See below, under Koweit.

† Value of imports of arms and ammunition in 1906–7 (5,617*l.* represents 5 per cent. (the amount of the customs duty at Muscat) on this sum.

The control of the arms traffic would presumably be vested in the Sultan's Customs Department. There is thus afforded an additional argument in favour of the Government of India's proposals,* renewed during the present year, that they should acquire the control of the Customs Administration of Muscat, guaranteeing the Sultan a minimum income of 20,000 dollars per mensem (25,600*l.* per annum at the rate of exchange current in 1907). It has been suggested that a suitable compensation to the Sultan for the loss of income entailed by the prohibition of the arms traffic would be to double the present subsidy he receives from Indian revenues (5,760*l.* per annum), and to raise it gradually, as may be necessary, to 15,000*l.* per annum. It is to be feared that if other Powers contribute towards the compensation paid to His Highness, they will obtain a *locus standi* for interference in the Muscat Customs Administration, which would constitute a serious disturbance of the *status quo*.

Viceroy's telegram of February 13, 1908.

2. *Bahrein.*—On the 30th April, 1898, the Sheikh of Bahrein, on the advice of the Resident in the Persian Gulf, agreed "absolutely to prohibit the importation of arms into Bahrein territory or exportation therefrom"; and to enforce the prohibition, he issued on the same day—

Government of India's letter of July 7, 1898.

(1.) A Notification declaring that the import and export of arms into and from the Islands of Bahrein was absolutely forbidden, and that in future all arms and ammunition imported or exported would be seized and confiscated as property of the State.

(2.) A Proclamation conferring on British and Persian vessels of war permission to search vessels carrying the British, Persian, or Bahrein flag in Bahrein territorial waters, as well as Bahrein vessels in Indian or Persian waters, and to confiscate all arms and ammunition (weapons of war) intended for Indian or Persian ports, or for the Islands of Bahrein.

The effect of the prohibition at Bahrein was at once perceptible in the customs returns, the total value of the imports of arms and ammunition, which had amounted to 30,849*l.* in 1897, falling to 313*l.* in the following year. In October 1905 the Sheikh of Bahrein addressed a Memorial to the Government of India, in which, among other alleged grievances, he complained of the fact that he was obliged to interdict the sale of arms, and was thereby deprived of an advantage enjoyed by all the Arab Chiefs along the Arabian coast. He was informed in reply, in May 1906, that the restriction on the importation of arms at Bahrein had first been imposed in 1895 by himself on his own initiative, and his attention was drawn to the measures he had himself spontaneously taken from time to time to stop the traffic. It was also pointed out to him that the Sheikh of Koweit and the Sheikhs of the Trucial Coast had similarly prohibited the traffic of arms in their territory, and he was given to understand that the Government of India would not consider for a moment the possibility of cancelling or modifying the Agreement he had concluded with the British Government on this point.

Government of India's letter of May 31, 1906.

There seems good reason to believe that a considerable amount of illicit arms traffic goes on at Bahrein. Writing in December 1906, Major Cox furnished evidence that the port was rapidly rising to importance as a centre of the trade. The business in arms there, hitherto confined to one dealer, had been taken over by a Company, two of the shareholders being friends of Sheikh Esa and opponents of customs reform. He added that the business had been largely extended, and Bahrein was being used as a distribution centre for supplying Persia.

Major Cox to Government of India, December 2, 1906.

3. *Koweit.*—On the 24th May, 1900, the Sheikh of Koweit entered into an agreement with the British Government, by which he engaged "absolutely to prohibit the importation of arms into Koweit or exportation therefrom." To carry out this engagement he issued on the same day (1) a Notification declaring that "the importation of arms and ammunition into Koweit and the territory under my control, and the exportation of the same are absolutely prohibited," and that "all arms and ammunition imported into any parts of Koweit territory, or exported therefrom, in future will be seized and confiscated;" (2) a Proclamation conferring on British and Persian vessels of war the right to search, in Koweit territorial waters, vessels carrying the British, Persian, or Koweit flag, as well as Koweit vessels in Indian and Persian waters; and to confiscate any arms and ammunition destined for Indian, Persian or Koweit ports.

Government of India's letter of July 5, 1900.

In spite of the above Notification little serious attempt has been made to check the import of arms into Koweit. In April 1901, at a time when tribal warfare was in

Viceroy's telegram of May 29, 1901.

* See pp. 14, 15 of Foreign Office Memorandum of the 12th February, 1908

full progress in the interior of Arabia, the Government of India pointed out that no arrangements had as yet been made with the Porte for the combined suppression of the traffic, and that the importation of arms was proceeding briskly. In view of the support rendered by the Turks to Ibn Rashid, Amir of Nejd, one of the warring Chiefs of the interior, the Government of India were anxious that no additional check should be imposed on the arms traffic at Koweit, which afforded the main source of supply to the rival Chieftain, Ibn Saoud, Amir of the Wahabi. It was explained that this did not involve authorizing the Sheikh of Koweit to import arms, or even relaxing measures actually in force, but merely letting matters remain as they were. His Majesty's Government accepted this view, and the Government of India were informed on the 24th June, 1904, that fresh measures for the prevention of the importation of arms at Koweit would for the present be deferred.

Mr. Brodrick to Government of India, June 24, 1904.

The latest reports of the Political Agent at Koweit show that a large and increasing traffic in arms is being carried on at that port. Major Knox, in his Trade Report for 1906–7, drew attention to the large increase during the year in the value of the arms imported in country sailing-boats, and remarked that "the well-known dislike of the British authorities to this traffic, while it has had no effect in checking the import of arms and ammunition, has had the very unfortunate result of losing to a British Company (the British India Steam Navigation Company) the freight on 13 lakhs worth of goods."

Major Knox to Government of India, May 7, 1907.

Major Knox found it necessary in May 1906 to remind Sheikh Mubarak formally of his Arms Prohibition of 1900, and to request that it might be more strictly enforced. The Sheikh did not take the reminder in good part, and the Resident in the Persian Gulf gave his opinion that the question was one which might at any time endanger the good relations between the Sheikh and the Political Agent. Major Knox put the case still more strongly in a letter to the Resident. "The Proclamation," he wrote on the 3rd July, 1906, "is not worth the paper it is written on, and is only a cause of friction."

Major Knox to Government of India, August 19, 1906.

4. *Trucial Chiefs.*—At the close of 1902 the Trucial Chiefs entered into engagements respecting the arms traffic, similar to those of the Sheikhs of Bahrein and Koweit.

5. *Turkey.*—The importation of arms and munitions of war of all kinds into Turkey was prohibited by an Imperial Decree which was notified to the British Embassy in February 1862. The orders issued under this Decree to the custom-house authorities were communicated to the British Embassy by the Ottoman Government on the 11th February, 1863. They forbade absolutely the import into any part of the Ottoman Empire of all arms and ammunition, except "les armes de chasse et de luxe, les armes blanches, tels que sabres, épées et couteaux, et la poudre de chasse en petite quantité, destinés à l'usage privé"; and stated that all contraband articles would be confiscated by the State.

On the 4th October, 1893, the Porte made a fresh communication to the Powers, inclosing the Regulations which had been accepted in the Turco-German Commercial Treaty just then concluded, and notifying them as those in force. The acceptance of these Regulations was not at the time considered opportune by Great Britain and the other Powers, but it would seem that, nevertheless, the Turkish Government continued to regard the Regulations as those in force in the Ottoman dominions.

In their despatch of the 30th July, 1903, the Government of India recommended that an endeavour should be made to come to an arrangement with Turkey permitting vessels under the Turkish flag to be searched for arms by British ships of war, or, failing this, that the Porte should be asked to notify formally to His Majesty's Government that the importation of arms into Ottoman dominions without special licence was prohibited.

Government of India's letter of July 30, 1903.

Sir N. O'Conor to Lord Lansdowne, November 16, 1903.

Sir N. O'Conor, who was consulted on the matter, drew attention to the notifications that had already been made by the Turkish Government, and suggested that they might sufficiently serve the purpose the Government of India had in view. As regards the right of search, Sir N. O'Conor wrote:—"In conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I gathered that the Turkish Government would be willing enough to co-operate in our endeavours to suppress the traffic in arms, but that the right to search Turkish vessels could only be conceded in exchange for a reciprocal privilege; an arrangement which, however one-sided it might prove in practice, would, in principle, be open to obvious objections."

6. *Persia.*—In 1881 the Persian Government issued a Decree that "no arms or munitions of war, such as guns, caps, gunpowder, &c., should enter Persian territory without the permission of the Great Government." In announcing the issue of this Decree to the British Legation, the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote as follows on the 3rd July, 1881: "Since the right of purchasing arms and introducing the same into Persia belongs to the Persian Government, who exercise it through their own specially appointed officials, and if this absolute right were not exclusively confined to the Government, and everybody who thought fit to do so were allowed to purchase such articles and introduce them into the country, this great governmental privilege would become obsolete, and considerable evils would result to the State. Therefore His Majesty the Shah has issued orders that no one shall import arms of any description whatsoever into this country from abroad, and any person in whose possession arms of foreign make are found will be liable to have them confiscated by Government."

Mr. Thomson to Lord Granville, July 12, 1881.

As regards the measures taken by the Persian authorities to enforce the Decree of 1881, it may be noted that in May 1891 both the Shah himself and the Amin-es-Sultan telegraphed to the Governor of Bushire complaining of the sale in Tehran of arms by British and Parsee merchants, and giving strict orders that the prohibition on imports should be maintained, and all arms imported should be confiscated. In the year 1893 the local authorities seized seventeen cases of arms consigned to a Muscat firm, which were landed at Bushire for transhipment, on the ground that complaints had been received from the Turkish Government of arms being smuggled from Persian territory. The goods were confiscated. In the year 1895 the British steamer "Zulu" landed by mistake at the Bushire custom-house several cases of arms consigned to Muscat; these were seized by the local authorities. In January 1897, while the "Zulu" case was still pending, the first preventive officer was appointed at Bushire by the Persian Government.

Sir M. Durand to Lord Salisbury, June 10, 1898.

Apart from these incidents, there is nothing to show that effective measures were taken to prevent the smuggling of arms, and on the 15th April, 1895, Sir M. Durand, in a despatch to Lord Salisbury, admitted that there could be "little doubt that a considerable illicit import of arms into Persia is being carried on, and that European firms are not wholly unconcerned in it."

Sir M. Durand to Lord Salisbury, April 15, 1895.

At the close of 1897, as a result of British pressure, the Persian Government agreed that "in addition to such measures as may be taken by Persian officials, Her Majesty's ships should examine and search all merchant-vessels trading in the Persian Gulf, and confiscate and hand over to the Persian Government all prohibited arms found on board." The Grand Vizier's note of the 18th December, 1897, in which this Agreement was embodied, further stated that the Persian Government was ready "to join with Her Majesty's Government in requesting the Sultan of Muscat to notify in the ports and territories of Muscat that arms should not be imported from that side into Persia or Hindustan, also that English ships should exercise in regard to search and confiscation the same rights in Muscat as in Persian waters."

Mr. C. Hardinge to Lord Salisbury, January 5, 1898.

The joint representations to the Sultan were successful, and it was owing to the conclusion of an Agreement with Muscat that Her Majesty's ship "Lapwing" was able, on the 24th January, 1898, to seize the steamer "Baluchistan," near Muscat, and capture the cargo of arms she was carrying. An action was brought by Messrs. Fraeis, Times and Co., who had shipped a consignment of arms by the "Baluchistan," against the Sea Insurance Company, Limited, to recover a loss under a policy of marine insurance on the consignment. This loss the Company had refused to pay on two grounds:—(1) That the plaintiffs had, when effecting the insurance, concealed a fact material to the estimation of the risk, viz., that the importation of arms was forbidden by Persian law; and (2) that the adventure was illegal, as being in contravention to the law of nations. Mr. Justice Bigham, in giving judgment for the plaintiffs, held that "the import of arms was not illegal according to the law of Persia, as that law was administered in practice and enjoined," or, in other words, that no real prohibition existed on the importation of arms into Persian ports. As regards the legality of the act of seizure, the question was determined by the further action brought by Messrs. Fraeis, Times and Co. against Captain Carr, R.N., the officer who had seized the "Baluchistan," for wrongful deprivation of property. Mr. Justice Grantham, who tried the case in the first instance, found for the defendant, and his judgment, after being reversed by the Court of Appeal, was finally upheld by the House of Lords, on the ground that the seizure had taken

"Times" Law Reports, July 5, 1898, and July 9, 1901.

place in Muscat territorial waters, and was, under the Sultan's Proclamation of January 1898, justifiable according to the law of Muscat.

Mr. Spring-Rice to Lord Salisbury, May 28, 1900.

On the 1st January, 1900, the Shah promulgated a law reaffirming the prohibition against the importation into Persia of arms and ammunition, as well as various other commodities. The case of the British steamer "Hathor," on board of which arms were seized at Bushire in November 1900, led to an Order in Council being issued, on the recommendation of the Law Officers of the Crown, by which the Persian Law of the 1st January, 1900, was made applicable to British subjects, in so far as the provisions respecting arms and ammunition were concerned.

Mr. Grant Duff to Government of India, July 28, 1906.

It may be said generally that the efforts of the Persian authorities to put down the traffic have been quite ineffectual. "Possibly," wrote Mr. Grant Duff in July 1906, "when M. Naus has received the launches, now building for the Persian Government at Bombay" (since supplied) "something may be done by the Belgian officials to check the arms traffic. But there is no present likelihood of the Persian Government taking the slightest trouble to put an end to it. Even if they desired to do so, I doubt if they have the power."

The Government of India have done their best to check the trade at the Persian ports. In 1900 a Vice-Consul was appointed to Bunder Abbas, where "it was hoped that the presence of a British officer might lead to the display of greater vigour in the repression of the illicit importation of arms along the neighbouring portions of the Persian coast." In 1902 measures were concerted with the Persian Governor-General of Mekran to prevent the importation of arms into Persian Baluchistan, and to impose restrictions on their possession in that province. A further Conference on the subject took place between the Persian officials on the Mekran border and the British frontier officers in 1906, and the desire to cope with the illegal traffic in arms was one of the reasons which led, in the same year, to the temporary appointment of Lieutenant C. D. Ogilvie as Vice-Consul at Bam.

But the nature of the country is such that, once the consignments are landed and clear of the coast, it is virtually impossible to catch the caravans conveying them into the interior. This view is confirmed by the Report furnished by Lieutenant Ogilvie, who travelled through Persian Baluchistan in June 1906 on his way to take up his duties at Bam. He said that the local Persian authorities were quite incapable of dealing with the traffic, and that the Afghans employed in smuggling arms up country from the coast were invariably well armed, and could overcome any opposition offered to them with the greatest ease; and he explained in a later Report that "the communications in Baluchistan are so unspeakably bad that large caravans, when once they have left the coast, can travel without any fear of interference, even if such interference were contemplated by the authorities, and with the utmost secrecy." It may be added that the Sirdars of Persian Baluchistan are not beyond the suspicion of having a pecuniary interest in the trade.

As recently as November 1907 further measures were introduced by the Government of India, at the suggestion of Mr. New, of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, for dealing with the arms traffic on the Mekran coast. These measures included the creation of a small corps of camel *sowars* to patrol the coast between Jask and Chahbar, in order to collect information about the movements of Afghans, expected consignments of arms, &c., which they will communicate without delay to British ships engaged in the suppression of the trade.

How far these measures will be successful remains to be seen. For the present the situation may be summarized in the words used by the Government of India in their despatch of the 21st February, 1907. "We regard it as certain," they wrote, "that effective action for the suppression of the arms trade cannot be taken by the Persian authorities. On the coast, the Belgian Customs officials are few in number, and although, perhaps, willing to give assistance for the suppression of the traffic, they have not the means at their disposal really to take efficient measures to deal with the evil. Inland, as is well known, the Persian authorities are powerless outside the towns, and large caravans can travel by unfrequented routes without the slightest risk of interference."

Government of India's letter of February 21, 1907.

II.—*Quarantine.*

(Communicated by the India Office.)

A.

"The sanitary defence of the Persian Gulf," wrote Dr. Theodore Thomson in his Report of the 12th July, 1906, "has in the past received, and still continues to receive, considerable attention, not only in the interests of countries adjacent thereto, but also because it is maintained by some authorities that cholera and plague are particularly likely to invade these regions by reason of their nearness to, and frequent communication with, India, and thence to extend over-land to Europe. This view was voiced by M. Barrère, one of the French Delegates at the International Sanitary Conference of 1897, when he classified the Persian Gulf, along with the Red Sea, as the '*routes naturelles des maladies pestilentielles.*' In relation with this aspect of the matter the question of what measures should be adopted with a view to guarding against the suggested danger to Europe was discussed at the International Sanitary Conferences of 1894, 1897, and 1903; and in each of the Conventions drawn up at these Conferences clauses were incorporated embodying measures intended to secure this end."

Stated briefly, the Regulations framed under the Paris Convention of 1894, which had special reference to cholera, have in the main been a dead letter. The Regulations contemplated the establishment of a number of sanitary stations, under the control of the Turkish authorities, in the Persian Gulf, and the enforcement of quarantine against arrivals. The British Government, in adhering to the Convention, refused to accept the Appendix containing the Persian Gulf Regulations, on the grounds (1) that the posts were unnecessary; (2) that Turkey and Persia were too far off to maintain effective control; and (3) that the great expense entailed in establishing the ports would fall chiefly on British shipping, which formed 98 per cent. of the shipping in the Gulf. The scheme was not carried out.

When plague appeared in India in 1896 the Constantinople Board of Health* discussed at great length and on repeated occasions the question of new ports and the régime to be applied in the Gulf ports. It was ultimately decided to establish a permanent port at Fao, and to repulse plague-infected ships from Bussorah. A Commission was sent to Fao to select a site, but nothing further was done, and Fao remained a sanitary office with no lazaret and no sanitary apparatus.

In the Venice Sanitary Convention of 1897 provision was made simply for a sanitary station near Bussorah and another at or in the neighbourhood of the Island of Ormuz or of Kishm, near the entrance of the Gulf, these stations to be under the control of the Constantinople Board of Health. The establishment of the Ormuz station was to be subject to an agreement between Turkey and Persia. The Indian authorities objected to the proposed station at Ormuz on political grounds, holding that it would give the maritime control of the Persian Gulf to Turkey, and might become a means of harassing British shipping. The proposals were, however, accepted by the British Government, and Persia also ratified the Convention, subject to the reservation that the station at the entrance of the Gulf should be under the Persian flag and should have Persian guards. The provisions of the Venice Convention, in so far as they relate to the Persian Gulf, have remained, like those of the 1894 Convention, a dead letter. No lazaret was established at the entrance of the Gulf, and the Bussorah lazaret remained, to quote the words of Dr. Clemow, "the sole and very imperfect quarantine station in those regions."

The Paris Sanitary Convention of 1903, which was ratified in April 1907, provides for the Bussorah station as before, and for a sanitary station at Ormuz, both to be under the control of the Constantinople Board of Health. The Convention was signed by the British Delegates, subject to reservations which, it was hoped, would result in the abandonment of the Ormuz scheme. These reservations were (1) that the establishment of the Ormuz station should be deferred until the Board of Health

* This is a body of international composition, Great Britain being represented on it by Dr. F. G. Clemow, Physician to His Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople. Dr. Dickson, Dr. Clemow's predecessor, Physician to the British Embassy, thus described the Board in January 1898: "Notwithstanding its nominal international character, the Board is in reality a Turkish Department, guided by the real or pretended will of the Sultan, and administered by its Turkish members;" and the British Government has always consistently maintained the view that the Board "is not independent of the Turkish Government, ... and that the Porte is responsible for all measures adopted on its advice."

had been reformed in the manner provided by the Convention; (2) that nothing should be done to carry out the scheme until the Mixed Commission, on which we, with other European Powers are represented, should have *unanimously* voted the necessary funds. Doubts were at the same time expressed by His Majesty's Government, through the British Delegates, as to the necessity for a station near the entrance of the Gulf, which was not proved by the experience of recent years, and as to the suitability of Ormuz, with its unhealthy climate, as a site for the purpose proposed.

The Persian Government made a further proposal, in the form of a *Déclaration Additionnelle* to the Paris Convention, that the station at the mouth of the Gulf should be controlled by Persia, and should be placed on the Island of Henjam instead of Ormuz.

In this connection Dr. Faivre was sent by the French Government in the early part of 1905 to the Persian Gulf, to ascertain and report whether the Island of Henjam would or would not be more suitable as a site for a "sentinel" station near the entrance of the Gulf than the Island of Ormuz. He reported in September 1905. Stated briefly, his recommendations, which went beyond the terms of his reference and dealt with the whole question of the sanitary defence of the Gulf, were as follows:—

1. That lazarets should be established at Henjam and Fao, to be controlled respectively by the Persian Government and by the Constantinople Board of Health; and

2. That sanitary stations for purposes of "observation" should be erected at Bunder Abbas, Lingah, Bushire, and Mohammerah, under the control of the Persian Government, and at Busserah, Koweit, Bahrein, Debai, and Muscat, under the control of the Constantinople Board of Health.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir E. Grey, December 8, 1906.

Mr. Bonde's to Government of India, September 8, 1905.

Viceroy's telegram of November 6, 1905.

Dr. Faivre's Report did not reach His Majesty's Government until December 1906. In the meanwhile it had been decided in November 1905 that Dr. Theodore Thomson, of the Local Government Board, should visit the Persian Gulf on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and report "on the sanitary requirements of those regions in respect, not only of Persia, but also of Europe, as well as on the question of the need of a sanitary station and the suitability of Ormuz, Henjam, or other sites for the purpose." The Government of India, who were consulted as to the proposal, agreed that it might be advantageous at any future discussions for the British Government to have at its disposal expert information independent of that collected by Dr. Faivre, but expressed the earnest hope that "British opposition to establishment of sanitary station will be uncompromisingly maintained." It may here be noted that the objections of the British Government to the establishment of an international sanitary station in the Persian Gulf, as classified by the Foreign Office in April 1906, are (1) political, in so far as the station would introduce a certain amount of international control in a sphere of British influence; (2) commercial, as placing within the reach of other Powers a ready means of hampering and restricting the shipping trade with Bombay and Kurrachee, against which a fair pretext for quarantine can always be found, and through which the bulk of English as well as the whole of Indian trade with Persia; (3) sanitary, it being considered that the proposed station, far from acting as a check upon disease, would serve rather to spread that insalubrity which it would be destined to prevent, by subjecting the crews and passengers on the vessels detained, the large majority of which would be British, to the dangers of a pernicious climate and unhealthy surroundings.

Dr. Thomson left for India, on his way to the Gulf, in January 1906. His Report, which will be discussed hereafter, was submitted in the following July.

The terms of the Persian "Declaration Additionnelle" to the 1903 Convention (viz. (1) that the station to be established at the entrance of the Gulf in accordance with the Venice Convention of 1897 should be under Persian, and not international, control; and (2) that it should be placed on the Island of Henjam, and not Ormuz) were communicated by the French Government to the British Ambassador at Paris in December 1905, with an intimation that the Persian proposals were favourably viewed by them. These proposals did not commend themselves to the British Government, partly on the ground that any such arrangement would defeat the object of the British reserves, viz., the postponement of the scheme for a station at the entrance of the Gulf, and partly because they doubted the ability of the Persian

authorities to provide the necessary funds for the purpose.* In regard to this latter point, Mr. Grant Duff, writing from Tehran on the 15th November, 1905, said that he did not think "there is the slightest prospect of the provisions of the Convention, or any other sanitary measures, being carried out, except in those ports where the quarantine arrangements are under European control, so long as Persia remains under its present Government." The French Government, however, continued to press the point, and in support of the Persian proposals stated that Dr. Faivre (whose Report His Majesty's Government had not yet seen) had pronounced in favour of Henjam, the island chosen by the Persian Government, as being a suitable position for the station, while, at the same time, they pointed out that it would be difficult for them to explain to Persia that one of the reasons for which Great Britain had decided not to accept the Persian proposal was the incapacity of the Persian Treasury to bear the expenses. It was also urged that, if the Persian offer were declined, Persia might refuse to ratify the Paris Convention or make her ratification conditional on reserves, which would cause still further delay in bringing the Convention into operation.

At this stage of the discussion Dr. Thomson's Report reached the hands of His Majesty's Government in July 1906. Its general conclusions were opposed to the creation of a sanitary station at the entrance to the Gulf, (1) because it still remained to be proved that epidemics had been conveyed to Europe by that route; (2) because a sanitary station at that point would be ineffective, inasmuch as it would be evaded by native sailing craft, the most dangerous class of shipping; and (3) because no suitable position could be found for such a station, Henjam, though upon the whole the most suitable site in other respects, being open to serious objections on account of its climate, its inadequate water supply, and its lack of provisions.

Dr. Thomson's own recommendations were summarized as follows at the close of his Report:—

"In substance, therefore, the scheme best adapted, in the circumstances, to [illegible] able degree of protection to Europe and the minimum of interference with commercial interests in the Gulf of Persia consists in the perfecting of the present sanitary stations at Mohammerah and Bushire, the establishment of a sanitary station at Koweit, and the creation of a new station in place of that now existing at Busserah. Sanitary defence of the Gulf based on these lines will afford a greater degree of protection to Europe against plague and cholera than would be secured by a 'sentinel station' near the entrance of the Gulf, combined with a terminal station at Busserah, and will not impose on shipping the unnecessary and prejudicial restriction that would result from the latter scheme.

"If this view should meet with acceptance, I would urge that steps should be taken to put the scheme I have suggested in operation with all possible speed. I view the alternative 'sentinel station' project with apprehension, as calculated to be ineffective, expensive, and gravely detrimental to commercial interests—and these are mainly British—in the Gulf. Abandonment of this 'sentinel station' project is much more likely to follow on knowledge that defensive measures, of the kind and at the places I have indicated, are in actual operation than on mere announcement that such measures are in contemplation."

Dr. Thomson's views as to the "sentinel station" were adopted by His Majesty's Government, and the French Government were informed that the Persian proposals were inacceptable, a decision which was in due course communicated to Persia and to the other parties to the Convention.

Sir C. Spring-Rice at the end of 1906 explained the position to Dr. Schneider, President of the Tehran Sanitary Council,† who promised to do his best to prevent the question being again raised. Dr. Schneider observed, however, that it would greatly facilitate his task, should the matter be brought before the Sanitary Council, if the Government of India would consent to improve the conditions under which quarantine measures were at present carried out in the Gulf, &c., by increasing the European personnel and by supplying disinfection stoves and rat-destroying apparatus at each of the five ports (viz., Mohammerah, Bushire, Lingah, Bunder Abbas, and Jask), instead of at Bushire only. Dr. Schneider added that the Persian Government had not the necessary funds at their disposal, and that the expense would necessarily fall on the Indian Government.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, December 31, 1906.

* In his despatch of the 27th April, 1906, to Sir F. Bertie, Sir E. Grey wrote: "The unsatisfactory state of Persian finances makes it hard to believe that that country would be ready to incur the necessary expenditure, and it would seem clearly indicated that the Persian Government [illegible] scheme may be said to have originated rather in St. Petersburgh than in Tehran."

† Dr. Thomson further considered that there would "be advantage to commerce in also fully equipping the sanitary station at Bunder Abbas."

‡ This body was instituted by the Shah in 1901 as a result of the cholera panic. It [illegible] European physicians of the Shah as well as several Legation physicians and Persian doctors. Its functions are purely advisory and it has neither funds nor executive of any sort under its control.

B.

Major Cox to Government of India, September 6, 1904.

Persian Gulf Residency Administration Report, 1903-07.

Viceroy's telegrams of August 12 and 20, 1903.

Col. and Kemball to Government of India, February 8, 1904.

Sir A. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne, August 6, 1903.

Viceroy's telegram of August 12, 1903.

Viceroy's telegram of March 19, 1904.

Sir A. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne, September 6, 1904.

It will be convenient at this stage to give a brief account of the quarantine system hitherto administered in the Persian Gulf by officers of the Indian Government. In September 1904 Major Cox, after examining the old records regarding the sanitary control in the Persian Gulf, reported that "since 1864, and probably before, it has been entirely in our hands; but our control seems to have come into existence automatically, and I can trace no original arrangements with the Persian Government." The appearance of plague at Bombay in the autumn of 1896 rendered it imperative to adopt quarantine precautions in the Gulf. The resources of the Persian Government were unequal to the inauguration of adequate measures, and the task was, with the consent and at the desire of the Persian Government, undertaken by the British Residency at Bushire. After some difficulty, quarantine was placed on satisfactory and efficient footing at Bunder Abbas, Lingah, and Mohammerah, for which the services of assistant surgeons were lent by the Government of India, as well as at Bushire.

In August 1903 the Government of India reported that three assistant surgeons were employed exclusively on quarantine duties at Mohammerah, Bunder Abbas, and Lingah, while at Bushire and Jask the duty was done by the assistant surgeons attached to the Residency and the telegraph station respectively. The cost of the quarantine establishment at the first three ports, estimated at 1,450 rupees a-month (1,184*l.* per annum) was borne by the Persian Government, while a charge of about 340 rupees a-month (272*l.* per annum) fell upon Indian revenues in respect of the quarantine duties discharged by the doctors at Jask and Bushire. The assistant surgeons were placed under the immediate orders of the Residency Surgeon at Bushire, who was in the executive charge of the quarantine arrangements. Financially, control was vested in the Customs Administration, to whom all fees were made over by the quarantine officials.

Attempts have from time to time been made to undermine the position of the British Quarantine Administration. On the 6th August, 1903, Sir A. Hardinge telegraphed that the Russians were pressing the Persian Government to take the Gulf quarantine arrangements out of the hands of the British doctors and to place them under the Belgian Customs Department. Six days later the Government of India telegraphed that they had "positive proof" that the Persian Government intended to carry out this suggestion, and recommended that the "strongest protest should be made against a change so injurious to British interests," and that His Majesty's Government should resolutely resist the "principle that quarantine arrangements in the Gulf can be subverted, without our knowledge or consent, or that a body of foreigners can be put in expressly to hamper British trade, the tonnage of which is over 90 per cent. of the total." The Persian Government, on being approached by Sir A. Hardinge, disclaimed all intention of removing the British doctors; but the British Minister was informed by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs that certain complaints against the manner in which they administered the quarantine "had suggested to the Shah the idea that it might be advisable to establish some closer supervision over their work." The question was again raised in February 1904 by Colonel Kemball's complaints of interference by the Customs Department in the executive work of the quarantine. The Government of India recommended "that a vigorous protest should at once be made against the disturbance of existing sanitary arrangements," but Sir A. Hardinge preferred to reserve any strong remonstrance until we were confronted with some definite act of encroachment by the Persian Government itself. Further interference on the part of the Customs authorities, coupled with the activity of M. Bussière, a doctor in the employ of the Customs Department, and attached to the French Vice-Consulate, and also, as subsequently appeared, to the Russian Consulate, at Bushire, again raised the question in an acute form. Representations were made by Sir A. Hardinge to the Persian Government and to M. Naus, the Head of the Persian Customs, with the result that in September 1904 the Grand Vizier promised to send telegraphic orders to Bushire that the Custom-house officers should abstain from interfering in the quarantine administration of the Gulf ports. The actual text of the instructions sent to the Director-General of Customs, Bushire, was as follows: "You are to abstain as far as possible from all interference with quarantine. Recommend this especially to Bussière. At the same time this does not deprive you of the right to report to Tehran any steps by the quarantine officials which may be prejudicial to the Persian Government." The Grand Vizier told Sir A.

Hardinge at the same time that he proposed to reopen the question on M. Naus' return from leave. Nothing further was done, however, and the settlement of the case remained for the time being undisturbed.

Sir A. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne, August 16, 1904.

Viceroy's telegram of October 27, 1904.

Arising out of these incidents, Sir A. Hardinge, in a despatch dated the 16th August, 1904, proposed that, in order to strengthen our position, the Government of India should decide "(1) itself to pay the salaries of the Indian doctors in the Gulf ports; and (2) to depute for these duties European rather than, as at present, native Indian assistant surgeons." The Government of India doubted the advantage of raising the former point, unless it was pressed by the Persian Government; they considered, moreover, that the "delegation of quarantine functions to British-paid officials seems to involve greater derogation from Shah's dignity than employment of British officers paid by Persian Government." The latter recommendation, however, was accepted, and the Government of India telegraphed, on the 31st December, 1904, that steps were being taken to provide "suitable Europeans to replace the present assistant surgeons at Mohammerah and Bunder Abbas as soon as possible," and that it was also proposed "to carry out a like change at other ports in the Persian Gulf if suitable men can be obtained." In March 1905 the Government of India were able to report that the necessary measures had been taken in regard to Mohammerah and Bunder Abbas, and that arrangements were being made for similar action in respect of the other ports.

During the year 1906 the question was again to the front. In the middle of September the Darya Begi, Governor of the Persian Gulf, wrote to the Residency Surgeon at Bushire, in his capacity as Chief Quarantine Officer for the Persian Gulf, informing him that the Persian Government would require the Persian flag, as well as the quarantine flag, to be flown, not only on all boats employed in quarantine work, but also on all ships undergoing quarantine in Persian ports. This step was believed to be the outcome of the action of the Russian Consul-General, who had informed the Darya Begi that Russian vessels would, in future, recognize no quarantine authority unless covered by the Persian flag, and that no correspondence would be carried on with the quarantine authorities in English, but only in Persian or French. A similar communication was made by the German Consul. Negotiations took place between the British Legation and the Persian Government, with the result that the latter tacitly dropped the requirement that ships in quarantine should fly the Persian flag, on finding that it was contrary to the general practice in other countries. They showed a disposition, however, to maintain their attitude as regards the flying of the Persian flag by boats engaged in quarantine duties.

In December 1906 the Russian ship "Trouvor" refused, on the advice of the Russian Consulate, to admit the quarantine officer on board at Bunder Abbas to carry out the inspection laid down by the Venice Convention. The same thing occurred at Lingah, but at Bushire the "Trouvor" fulfilled the usual formalities. The Russian Minister at Tehran at first attempted to argue that the conduct of M. Orsceuko, the Russian Consul at Bunder Abbas, was perfectly correct, but he finally agreed to send a telegram to M. Orsceuko enjoining a general compliance with the quarantine rules. Eventually it was settled between the British and Russian Ministers that the question should be disposed of by the Tehran Sanitary Council, and, on her return to Bunder Abbas the "Trouvor" accepted the inspection of the Sanitary Officer.

Further instances of interference on the part of M. Orsceuko occurred in March 1907, in connection with the British steamer "Madura" and the Russian steamer "Euphrates."

C.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, June 1, 1907.

In his despatch of the 1st January, 1907, reporting conversations with the President of the Tehran Sanitary Council, the British Minister at Tehran (Sir C. Spring-Rice) recommended that Dr. Schneider's suggestions for the increase of the European personnel and the improvement of the apparatus of the quarantine stations in the Gulf should be submitted to the Government of India for their consideration. These proposals, it may be noted, went somewhat beyond those made by Dr. Theodore Thomson in his Report of 12th July, 1906, inasmuch as Dr. Schneider contemplated improvements at all five of the Gulf ports, whereas Dr. Thomson's recommendations, so far as the coast of Persia was concerned,* were limited to perfecting the existing sanitary stations at Mohammerah and Bushire, and possibly improving the station at Bunder Abbas.

* Dr. Thomson also proposed the establishment of a station at Koweit, on the Arabian side of the Gulf.

Viceroy's telegram of February 6, 1907.

The Government of India, in a telegram dated the 6th February, 1907, expressed their agreement with Dr. Thomson's recommendations, and their willingness "to bear, for the present, the cost of necessary preliminary measures, including supply of disaffecting apparatus at Gulf ports, reserving right of subsequent recovery from the Persian Government in case of Persian ports, and subject, in the case of Koweit, to acquiescence of Sheikh in proposed arrangement." In April 1907 the British Minister at Tehran telegraphed that an attack might shortly be anticipated upon our control of the quarantine in Southern Persia, and that he trusted that steps would be taken to secure the maintenance of existing arrangements. He subsequently explained that his apprehensions were based upon (1) the impending retirement of the President of the Tehran Sanitary Council, who was friendly to British interests, and the possibility of his being replaced by some one hostile; and (2) the frank hostility shown towards our quarantine officers both by the Russian Consul at Bunder Abbas and by the Belgian Customs officials. Sir C. Spring-Rice recommended, in addition to the improvements of the sanitary service on the lines indicated in his despatch of the 1st January, that a communication should be made to the Russian Government to the effect that, in view (1) of the predominance of British trade and shipping; (2) of the impossibility of securing an efficient Persian service; and (3) of the necessity for good administration, His Majesty's Government expected that the Russian Government would offer no objection to the continuance of the present system.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, April 14 and 17, 1907.

His Majesty's Government decided to postpone making any representations to the Russian Government until the estimates of the cost of the proposed improvements had been received from the Government of India.

The outbreak of plague at Bahrein in April 1907 brought into notice the deficiency in the disinfecting equipment of the southern ports, and lent additional urgency to the question of improving the sanitary defence of the Gulf.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, May 19, 1907.

With a despatch dated the 19th May, 1907, Sir C. Spring-Rice transmitted a Memorandum by Dr. Schneider, President of the Tehran Sanitary Council, on the measures he recommended for the improvement of the quarantine service. These measures included the appointment of commissioned officers of the medical service to all five ports, and the provision of a stove and Clayton apparatus (for destroying rats, &c.), as well as a reserve stove, at Bushire. Sir C. Spring-Rice added, in a telegram dated the 30th May, that the Sanitary Council, while strongly approving the measures proposed, did not possess the necessary personnel, appliances, or funds to carry out the scheme, and would be very grateful for the assistance of the Government of India. Sir C. Spring-Rice expressed himself strongly in favour of the proposed improvements being undertaken by the British Government, and in this view the Foreign Office concurred, the following statement of policy being made in Mr. Mallet's letter of the 21st June, 1907:—

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, May 30; 1907.

Foreign Office to India Office, June 21, 1907.

"During the eleven years in which the control of quarantine arrangements in the Gulf has been in British hands, the Government of India have spent large sums on the service, which would be entirely lost if any change in the control were now to be made; and Sir E. Grey entirely agrees with His Majesty's Minister in considering it of great importance, both politically and commercially, to endeavour to maintain the *status quo* by improving the efficiency of the medical service."

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, July 12, 1907.

In July 1907 the Sanitary Council reported in favour of an extended scheme of improvement including sanitary stations at Bunder Abbas, Bushire, Mohammerah, Jask, and Lingah, with a mobile service under a European doctor. The Russian representative on the Council proposed that the sanitary service should be in "strict collaboration with the Customs," who should use the five small steamers they had recently acquired; he also desired the appointment of the French doctor of the Russian Consulate at Bushire as Inspector-General. Representations were made to the Russian Government, on the 24th July, in which it was pointed out that His Majesty's Government considered "the present quarantine arrangements as one of their special interests in the Persian Gulf and a part of the *status quo*." On the 27th July the Russian Minister at Tehran assured Sir C. Spring-Rice that the proposal of the Russian doctor had been made without his knowledge, and that care would be taken to prevent the recurrence of a similar incident.

Mr. Morley to Government of India, November 7, 1907.

On the 7th November, 1907, the following measures were actually sanctioned by His Majesty's Government:—

1. The provision of four stoves at Jask, Bunder Abbas, Lingah, and Mohammerah, under the charge of the present assistant surgeons; and of one stove at Bahrein

under a military assistant surgeon, to be appointed on a salary of 208*l.* per annum. The initial cost of the five stoves was estimated at 1,250*l.*, and the annual recurring expenditure on them at about 333*l.*

2. The provision of a Clayton apparatus at Bushire, at an initial cost of 1,000*l.*

3. The appointment of a mobile assistant, of the Indian Medical Service, at Bushire, at a cost of 560*l.* per annum.

The total estimated cost was: 2,250*l.* initial; 1,100*l.* recurring.

On the 4th January, 1908, the purchase of a portable stove for the mobile assistant was sanctioned, at a maximum cost of 40*l.*

The whole of this expenditure is to be shared equally between the Indian and Imperial Exchequers.

The sanctioned strength of the Quarantine Establishment in the Persian Gulf thus works out as follows:—

At Bushire.

Paid by the British Government—
One Residency surgeon (in executive chargeof the Quarantine Service).
One mobile assistant (of the Indian Medical Service).
One assistant surgeon (in sub-charge of Residency dispensary, stove, &c.).

At other Ports.

Paid by the Persian Government—
One assistant surgeon at Bunder Abbas.
" " Lingah.
" " Mohammerah.

Paid by the British Government—
One assistant surgeon at Bahrein.
" " Jask.*

At Koweit the assistant surgeon attached to the British Agency was empowered by the Sheikh in May 1907 to carry out the necessary measures for imposing quarantine on arrivals from Bahrein. Bahrein was declared free of plague in the following July.

III.—*Question of British Consular Representation in El Hasa and Katif.*

(Communicated by the India Office.)

Government of India's letter of March 31, 1904.

The question of British Consular representation in El Hasa and Katif was raised by the Government of India in 1904. In a despatch dated the 31st March of that year, Lord Curzon's Government represented that the Indian merchants of Bahrein, trading with the mainland, were subjected to many vexatious restrictions by the Turkish Customs farmer, and that official regulations at the Katif custom-house had been so used as to destroy the British trade previously established at that place. It was pointed out, in illustration, that the Bania community of Katif had, in 1900, been reduced from one of 70 or 80 persons to a single trader, and, further, that those still desirous of carrying on trade at the port had, in the same year, expressed their willingness to pay, in advance, the cost of maintaining a British Agent to protect their interests on the spot. This request, it was added, was repeated during Lord Curzon's visit to the Persian Gulf in 1903,† when the British Indian merchants of Bahrein petitioned his Excellency for the appointment of a British Representative to protect their interests at Katif. The Government of India accordingly recommended (1) that the Political Agent at Bahrein should be appointed Vice-Consul for El Hasa, and (2) that a Native Consular Agent should be stationed at Katif.

Sir N. O'Conor to Lord Lansdowne, June 28, 1904.

Sir N. O'Conor, who was consulted, thought that these suggestions should not be pressed for the moment, and his view was accepted by His Majesty's Government.

* At Jask the quarantine duties are discharged by the assistant surgeon attached to the Eastern Telegraph Department station. He receives a special local allowance for the purpose.

† It was again repeated to Major Cox in July 1904, the merchants offering to pay a fee equivalent to 2,000 rupees per annum towards the cost of the appointment.

Mr. Brodrick to Government of India, August 5, 1904.

In communicating this decision to the Government of India, Mr. Brodrick wrote as follows, in a despatch dated the 5th August, 1904:—"It will be seen that His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, ... , having regard to the interpretation which the Turkish Government might place on the appointment of a Consular officer for El Hasa, and to the objection they would feel, at present, to recognizing such an officer, does not consider it advisable that effect should be given to the suggestion that the Political Officer at Bahrein should be invested with Vice-Consular jurisdiction over the Turkish district of El Hasa. For similar reasons, Sir N. O'Conor is of opinion that the present moment is unsuited for appointing a Native Consular Agent at Katif, and he suggests that the consideration of this proposal should be deferred till the result is seen of the representations which he has addressed to the Turkish Government, in regard to the grievances of the Indian traders, which formed the subject of the Government of India's letter of the 31st March, 1904. These views are approved by His Majesty's Government."

Mr. Townley to Lord Lansdowne, November 22, 1903.

In September 1903 the British Consul at Bussorah reported that the necessary instructions had been sent to the Mutessarif of Hasa, regarding the abatement of the excess duties at Katif, of which British Indians had complained; and Mr. Brodrick informed the Government of India, on the 20th December, 1904, that he had intimated to the Foreign Office that, "if practical effect is given to these orders, it will be unnecessary to press for the appointment of a Consular Agent at Katif."

Mr. Brodrick to Government of India, December 20, 1904.

The question has not subsequently been raised.

IV.—*Mohammerah.*

Sheikh Khazal is the acknowledged Head of the Muhaisen tribe of the Chaab Arabs, living on both sides of the Karun, from near Shuster to its junction with the Shat-el-Arab near Mohammerah, and on the left bank of the Shat-el-Arab from Mohammerah to its mouth, and between the Tigris and the Shat-el-Arab to the west, and to the Jerrish River on the east.

Mr. Spring-Rice, No. 15, March 20, 1900.

As regards the Persian Government, the position of the Sheikh, who murdered his brother, Sheikh Mizal, in 1897, has always been that of a great feudal Prince, who in smaller matters has thought it well to humour the Central Government while remaining at the same time extremely jealous in matters touching his quasi-independence.

His attitude to British interests has been friendly, and in striking contrast to that of the Persian officials in South-west Persia.

Ever since 1898 the Sheikh has shown himself nervous about his position in the event of the break-up of the Persian Empire, and anxious to obtain guarantees regarding the independence of his territories in certain eventualities.

In November 1899, when Sir M. Durand visited the Karun, the Sheikh made a request for assurances. While declining to afford guarantees of the nature desired, Sir M. Durand intimated to him that "he might rely upon our help whenever we could give it without ill-faith to the Persian Government."

The intention formed by the Central Government in 1900 to include Mohammerah in the newly organized Customs system increased the anxiety of the Sheikh to obtain some kind of guarantee, the more so since rumours were prevalent that the contemplated changes would be used as a pretext for putting an end to his power as that of the last of the great feudal Chiefs of Persia.

Fears were also entertained that if the Sheikh were forcibly to resist any such attempts the Persian Government would retaliate by their favourite method of intrigue, and endeavour to create dissension in the Chaab tribe by setting up the nephew of Sheikh Khazal, Sheikh Aboud, who resided at Ahwaz, and was not on the most cordial terms with his uncle.

In March 1900 a Memorandum was communicated to the Persian Government by Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires.

Mr. Spring-Rice, No. 17, March 27, 1900.

In this paper it was stated that the British Consul-General at Bushire had recently called Lord Salisbury's attention to the state of affairs at Mohammerah. In order to avoid difficulties in the future his Lordship thought it best that there should be a clear understanding of his views as to the ports of Mohammerah, Bushire, and Bunder Abbas, and other ports of the Gulf.

The control of these ports by a foreign Power might lead to a state of things which Her Majesty's Government, in the interests of the Indian Empire, would be

bound to resist. This had been recognized by the Persian Government, who, on the 23rd October, 1897, gave a written promise that the customs of Southern Persia should never be placed under foreign control and supervision. Her Majesty's Government must hold the Persian Government to the strict observance of this engagement.

As the Persian Government were aware, far the larger part of the trade of the above-mentioned ports was British. This trade imposed certain duties upon Her Majesty's Government, and they could not pass without notice any measure likely to affect its position and prospects. It was from this point of view that the Marquess of Salisbury desired to inform the Persian Government that, in view of British interests in the trade of Mohammerah and in the navigation of the Karun, Her Majesty's Government must insist upon their right to be consulted before any change were made in the administration of the customs or in the position of the Sheikh. In claiming such a right of consultation, the Persian Government could have no doubt as to the anxiety of the British Government for the preservation of order, the maintenance of the Persian sovereignty, and the improvement of Persian resources. In all these the interests of Her Majesty's Government were second only to those of Persia herself.

The reply of the Persian Government was verbal:—

Mr. Spring-Rice, No. 27, April 5, 1900.

"Not only in Mohammerah, but in every part of Persia where British interests were concerned, the Persian Government, before taking any steps of importance, would consult the British Government, but Persia could not give a definite Agreement with regard to a special point of her territory, as such an Agreement might appear to others like a consent to partition."

On the 10th May, 1900, Lord Salisbury addressed a despatch to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, in which he wrote as follows:—

"You should take any opportunity that may offer itself to explain that Her Majesty's Government have no desire to diminish, but rather seek to uphold and confirm, the authority of the Persian Government in the southern provinces, and that it is in the interest of Persia, as well as of Great Britain, that they endeavour to prevent the intrusion of other Powers."

The annexed extracts from a despatch, dated July 1901, from His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, show in some detail how the question of giving a British assurance to the Sheikh arose:—

Sir A. Hardinge, No. 118, July 28, 1901.

"The Sheikh is evidently nervous about the designs of the Persian Government, and looks to us for assistance and protection.

"If a Russian Consul-General should come to Bushire the Sheikh may, should such support be withheld by us, be tempted to coquet with him, or at any rate to modify to some extent the friendly relations which he has hitherto cultivated with the British Resident at Bushire.

"It is undoubtedly important that he should continue to be our friend and to be guided by our advice, and I am therefore anxious to be able to give him such assurances of support as will prevent his looking for help elsewhere.

"I shall visit him in the course of the tour to the Persian Gulf ports which I hope to undertake next October, and I should be grateful if your Lordship would instruct me as to the language which I should hold to him in reply to the questions which he will almost certainly put to me in regard to possible difficulties between himself and the Persian Government.

"My idea is that we should endeavour to persuade him to come to a fair arrangement with the Persian Customs, as it is impossible that M. Naus, in reorganizing that service, can allow so important a port as Mohammerah to remain beyond his control, but that we should, in view of possible Russian activity in Southern Persia, attach him to ourselves by a promise that we will not let his political authority over his tribesmen be destroyed or undermined by the Persian Government.

"I am fully aware of the difficulty of supporting local quasi-hereditary Chiefs who are subjects of the Shah against endeavours by the Persian Government to weaken their positions and extend the power of the Central Government at their expense. Seistan is a case in point.

"At the same time our neglect or reluctance to do this may be taken advantage of to the detriment of our interests by our rivals, and it is clear that Colonel Kemball thinks that some definite assurance of assistance in certain contingencies should be given to the Sheikh of Mohammerah.

"I would propose to urge him to be loyal to the Persian Government, to come with the help and, if necessary, mediation of His Majesty's Vice-Consul, to an arrangement with the Customs which would indemnify him for the loss of their administration by himself, and to trust to us to protect him against any attempt from Tehran—in my opinion, a very improbable one—to diminish or encroach upon his authority as Chief over his people. If we give him an assurance that we shall so protect him, we ought to be prepared, in the unlikely contingency of such an attempt as I have suggested, to send a gun-boat to Mohammerah and to let the Persians know

that we shall not acquiesce without good reason to the deposition of the Sheikh, or interference by the Governor-General of Arabistan in the internal affairs of his tribe.

"Your Lordship can, of course, judge better than I to what extent the grant of such an assurance is in accordance with the general policy of His Majesty's Government in Southern Persia, and how far it would be wise and safe to give it. It is clear that the Sheikh is, perhaps, unnecessarily anxious about his future, though no doubt he is more or less trying to bluff us into giving him pledges of support; but I would venture to submit that the time has come for us to decide how far we are prepared to back him up, should the Persian Government, perhaps at Russian instigation, determine to destroy his, so to speak, autonomous position, and what counsel Colonel Kemball and I should give him should he appeal to us, as he seems disposed to do, for our advice."

Sir A. Hardinge, No. 167, December 5, 1902.

The upshot of this correspondence was that Sir A. Hardinge informed the Sheikh on the 7th December, 1902, under instructions from Lord Lansdowne, that "we shall protect Mohammerah against naval attack by a foreign Power, whatever pretext for such action may be alleged, and also, so long as you remain faithful to the Shah and act in accordance with our advice, shall continue to give you our good offices and support."

This assurance was really necessitated by the urgency of arriving at a solution of the question, as Sir A. Hardinge reported in March 1902 that the Russians had been making offers for over a year to reduce the Sheikh of Mohammerah to subjection by force, and that they had been pressing the Persian Government to adopt towards him an uncompromising attitude. The assurance was actually given after an Arrangement about the Customs had been concluded, largely owing to the friendly intervention of His Majesty's Government; but it was probably only in consequence of this assurance that the Sheikh consented to avoid friction and to make the new Arrangement work smoothly.

On the 24th December, 1903, Sir A. Hardinge addressed a note to the Sheikh confirming the assurance of 1902, and adding that he might rest assured of the support of the British Government so long as he on his side observed the conditions of the Arrangement made with the Persian Government.

Sir A. Hardinge, No. 65, April 7, 1904.

In 1904 a Russian decoration was conferred on the Sheikh and a Commercial Mission was sent to Mohammerah.

Consul Mollandl, No. 1, August 25 1904.

One of the principal reasons for avoiding a conflict between the Persian Government and the Sheikh of Mohammerah has been the fear that such an event would raise the much larger question of the Turco-Persian frontier dispute. Mohammerah and the surrounding district have always been a bone of contention between the Turks and the Persians, and only recently the Sheikh expressed his apprehensions to His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire in regard to recent developments at more northerly points of the frontier. The views of his Majesty's Government are explained in the subjoined despatches.

"*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Mayling.*

"(No. 21.)

"Sir, "*Foreign Office, February 25, 1908.*

"I have received your despatch No. 17 of the 28th ultimo, in which you forward telegraphic correspondence with His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire relative to the apprehensions of the Sheikh of Mohammerah in regard to recent developments on the Turco-Persian frontier.

"I concur in your opinion that a gun-boat need not be sent to the Shatt-el-Arab under existing conditions, and I consider that when an attack appears more imminent the precise action to be taken by His Majesty's Government can be determined.

"It would, however, be advisable, in order to allay the Sheikh's apprehensions, to inform him that His Majesty's Government are fully alive to the situation, but that they do not anticipate Turkish aggression in the neighbourhood of Mohammerah, and you should instruct Major Cox accordingly."

"*Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.*

"(No. 75.)

"Sir, "*Foreign Office, February 25, 1908.*

"I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, relative to the apprehensions of the Sheikh of Mohammerah in regard to recent developments on the Turco-Persian frontier.

"As you are aware, His Majesty's Government have been content to allow the Russian Government, as being more closely concerned, to take the lead in regard to making any proposals for arresting the Turkish encroachments so long as they are confined to the northern portion of the frontier; but it is desirable that your Excellency should clearly understand that the position would be materially altered if there were to be an advance of Ottoman troops to the south, more especially in the neighbourhood of Mohammerah. In this district His Majesty's Government are not prepared to recognize any other frontier than that laid down by the

mediating Commissioners in 1850, as indicated in red on the accompanying sketch map; and in this connection I may recall the admission made by the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs to Her Majesty's Ambassador on the 18th November, 1893, to the effect that "the Turkish Government laid no claim whatever to Mohammerah."

"Any disturbance of the *status quo* at Mohammerah would affect British interests, and might not improbably lead to the active intervention of His Majesty's Government, who have given the Sheikh certain assurances in regard to his territory.

"Your Excellency should accordingly instruct His Majesty's Consuls at Bagdad and Busorah to furnish by telegraph early information of any aggressive designs in the district in question."

In January 1908 the British Consul-General at Bushire reported that the Sheikh was anxious that His Majesty's Government should guarantee himself and his own family as heirs in the enjoyment of their present position. Sir E. Grey considered that it would be advisable to maintain an attitude of reserve on this subject.

India Office, February 25, 1908.

March 18, 1908.

[9846] No. 92.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received March* 23.)

(No. 50. Commercial.)

Sir, *Pera, March* 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of two despatches on commercial subjects which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, who has taken great pains with these reports, for which he deserves much credit.

I am myself extremely doubtful whether road contracts in the interior could, as Mr. Heard suggests, be profitably taken up by foreigners, and Colonel Picot, to whom I have spoken on the subject, shares my doubts. He has, however, promised to mention the matter to Mr. Lynch.

It seems worth while to point out that the Anatolian Railway Company, which enjoys the general countenance of the Sultan and the powerful support of the German Embassy, has not been able to obtain sanction for its proposal to construct and keep up the main roads which act as feeders to its line, and that Mr. Heard's scheme would obviously have still less chance of success.

I may also add that apart from the physical difficulties in the way of good transport, the obstruction not only of the local authorities but also of the native carriers would vastly increase the risk of embarking capital in the ventures referred to in Mr. Heard's second despatch.

The papers might perhaps be shown to Mr. G. Lloyd.

I have, &c.
(In the absence of the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 92.

Vice-Consul Heard to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 1. Commercial.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, January* 30, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency, herewith inclosed, the first of a series of reports on the industrial and commercial possibilities of Kurdistan, dealing with roads and communications, based on information acquired on various official journeys.

The following general observations are submitted as prefatory to the more detailed reports which follow, with reference to their bearing on British commercial interests.

Though the present unsettled state of the country may appear to prohibit, or at any rate render extremely precarious the establishment of any foreign industrial enterprise in these regions, I am inclined to believe that openings might even now be found for the employment of British capital in various directions, and that the subject is worthy of consideration for the following reasons:—

1. Though the country contains undeveloped resources of great importance, no foreigner has as yet begun to exploit them or to initiate even the most insignificant

industrial enterprise. It is therefore greatly to be desired that pioneers of British industry should be the first to obtain a footing upon what is, industrially speaking, practically virgin soil. Once established, they would be the first to profit by any change in the political situation, which might cause a general revival of trade and commerce.

2. Such native industries as exist are carried on on the most primitive lines. The Government for various reasons is incapable of executing profitably any work of public utility. The people of the country, partly owing to the insecurity of private property, but chiefly owing to their ignorance of modern industrial methods and want of capital, cannot be expected to adopt more up-to-date appliances, involving a large outlay, until their utility has been clearly demonstrated by others. It remains therefore for the foreigner, who enjoys a greater command of capital, together with a protection which they are denied, to lead the way.

3. Raw materials and labour are abundant and cheap, and all the materials which are necessary for the carrying on of various staple industries are ready to hand. With the cheapening of transport large profits await the manufacturer in this country.

4. Though the attempted exploitation of the resources of Kurdistan by a foreign Company on a large scale would probably meet with insuperable difficulties owing to the well-known attitude of the Ottoman Government, I am inclined to believe that individuals, quietly establishing themselves in the country, and starting various enterprises in a small way, would not meet with much opposition on the part of the local authorities. Their undertakings would be on too small a scale to attract the attention of those persons in high quarters who are wont to prey on the ordinary concession hunter. After they had once obtained a footing it would be more difficult for the Government to check their progress, when their operations began to assume greater proportions.

5. British subjects would enjoy greater advantages than most foreigners, owing to the presence of British Consular officers in most of the Kurdish vilayets. The latter by their personal influence would probably be able to do much in arranging matters with the local authorities.

6. Any foreign undertaking of the kind suggested above must be directed on the spot. It cannot be worked from abroad. Hence, the desirability of urging the necessity of personal supervision on any one who desires to exploit the resources of the country or manufacture its raw materials.

Though, as already mentioned, the formation of a foreign Company for purposes of exploitation would hardly under present circumstances be practicable, it might be found possible to finance a number of industrial or commercial undertakings by joint private capital (an arrangement which need not be made public), with a view to combining them all in a general Development Company, should a favourable opportunity occur at some later date. Once this country were thrown open to foreign trade the position of such a Company would be strong, as it would have been the first to establish itself on the ground, and would hold so many threads in its hands.

As regards the introduction of machinery, &c., necessary for the working of any industry, whether native or foreign, I cannot urge too strongly the necessity for British firms to bestir themselves and to dispatch without delay competent agents provided with various agricultural and textile machines and appliances, for the former of which, from my own personal knowledge, a great but hitherto unfulfilled demand exists. There is little use in sending catalogues. I have made extensive inquiries in three vilayets, and the practically unanimous opinion of all I have consulted on the matter is, that though the people would gladly buy machines, once their practical utility were demonstrated, it is absolutely essential that they should first see them at work, and be taught how to put them together.

To illustrate this point I may quote a case which came under my notice in Abyssinia, a country still more backward than this. One of the partners in the well-known firm of J. Fowler and Co., Leeds, came out himself to Adis Ababa at considerable expense to make a proposal to King Menelek for the sale of road-engines. He succeeded in obtaining an order for two powerful and costly machines, which crossed some 250 miles of difficult country without a mishap under the charge of two English engineers. They were at once set to work to make roads, and one of the engineers having reported favourably on a coal-mine in the neighbourhood, it was resolved to connect it with the capital by a road. An order for two more engines promptly followed, since when it is not unlikely that others have been asked for.

The above is an instance of what may be accomplished by individual enterprise in an undeveloped country, where the utility of new methods must be shown by practical demonstration before they can be accepted by a primitive and ignorant people.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. B. HEARD.

Inclosure 2 in No. 92.

Report respecting Roads and Communications.

FROM a commercial point of view, the question of roads and transport takes precedence of all others in a backward and undeveloped country. If roads are lacking, the surplus produce of the most fertile districts cannot be exported. The population then grows only sufficient for its own needs, and agriculture stagnates. The export trade is crippled owing to the cost of transport, which is one of the causes underlying the poverty of native industries and the neglect of this country's natural resources. The import trade suffers doubly, (1) from the costliness of transport, and (2) from the want of markets, the people being unable to buy where they have nothing to sell—in other words, their purchasing power being limited by their ability to export.

In centres such as Kharput and Diarbekir, which are connected with the seaports by roads passable for wheeled transport, trade is less stagnant than in the isolated towns of the interior, but even in these cases transport might be greatly cheapened by improving the roads, which still leave much to be desired.

The following is a brief summary of the road system of Southern and Eastern Kurdistan (see map).[1]

The Alexandretta–Diarbekir Route.

Section Alexandretta–Aleppo (96 miles). "Chaussée."

Section Aleppo–Birejik (72 miles). There is no made road, though country is level.

Ferry at Birejik over Euphrates. The boats are antiquated, and there are no proper landing-stages.

Section Birejik–Urfa (43 miles). "Chaussée" for 15 or 18 miles after Birejik. After that no made road until 9 miles short of Urfa.

Section Urfa–Sewerek (40 miles). "Chaussée" for 9 miles after Urfa. After that no made road until Karajurun (20 miles from Sewerek).

Section Urfa–Diarbekir (62 miles). "Chaussée."

Out of an approximate total of 313 miles of road, some 120 still require to be made.

The Diarbekir–Bitlis Route.

The road to Miafarkin is a mere track (54 miles). From Miafarkin to Zokh (39 miles) there is no made road. The Batman Su is crossed by an ancient bridge.

Between Zokh and Bitlis (53 miles) there is a well-engineered road through the gorge of the Bitlis Su. It still falls short of Zokh by some 13 miles.

Out of an approximate total of 146 miles some 106 miles still require to be made. The country to Zokh is easy, but a large number of bridges and culverts would be required.

The Diarbekir–Kharput–Malatia Route (152 *miles*).

"Chaussée." Ferry over Euphrates. Road requires repairing in many places. This road is continued through Sivas to Samsun. It is much used for wheeled transport, and is the route followed by the Diarbekir–Constantinople post.

The Bitlis–Moush Route (*about* 40 *miles*).

A typical Turkish "chaussée." Is fairly well constructed until it reaches Moush Plain, after which it is mostly unmetalled until near Moush. In places coarse stones

[1] Not printed.

have been thrown down, which are carefully avoided by travellers. There is no foundation of larger stones, and in many places culverts are wanting to carry off the spring freshets. In some cases deep cuttings are made across it to let the water through.

After Moush the road crosses the Kara Su by a ford, the bridge being now useless. It next crosses the Murad Su by a 12-span bridge near Sulukh, and has now reached Sikavi, some 4 miles further on. It was proposed to connect Erzeroum with Moush by "chaussée" this year, but the work is progressing so slowly that this seems unlikely.

This is the main trade route to Moush and Bitlis, which obtain their imports from Trebizond and Erzeroum. It is at present hardly passable for wheels. It is also of military importance as the most direct route to Erzeroum from the Vilayets of Diarbekir, Mosul, Aleppo, &c.

Other roads which require constructing are—

The Sert–Zakh Road, to connect Sert with Diarbekir.

The Sert–Bitlis Road (which now carries the Diarbekir-Bitlis post). It is somewhat mountainous.

The Sert–Jezireh Road.—This reaches the Tigris near Til. It is necessary as a feeder to the river traffic to Mosul. From Til to Jezireh the country is mountainous. Continued to Mosul, this road forms the most direct route between Mesopotamia and Bitlis. It should accordingly have a strategic value.

The Diarbekir–Mardin Road (63 miles).—Has a certain local commercial value. Some 28 miles of "chaussée" have been made.

The Bitlis–Van Road.—Is called by courtesy a "chaussée," but can hardly be described as such. Van does most of its foreign trade by the Erzeroum–Adeljivas route, from which latter place goods are conveyed by boat. The Arjish route is unsafe.

There are tracks from Moush to Kharput viâ Jebakchur, from Diarbekir to Sert viâ Bisheri, from Diarbekir to Moush viâ Kulp, &c., but these are not routes of the first importance, and many of them are difficult.

An alternative road from Bitlis to Khinis viâ Tadvan, Akhlat, Gop, &c., would be useful and not difficult to construct.

The roads marked red on the map are absolutely essential to the economic life of the country. Until they are properly constructed throughout their entire length, the interior of Kurdistan must continue to remain a dead and inert region, lost to trade and incapable of development.

From a strategic point of view, the construction of the Aleppo-Diarbekir–Bitlis road, with extension to Erzeroum viâ Moush and Khinis, is of great importance. The Russians can concentrate on the frontier by rail and within striking distance of Erzeroum, whilst the Turks would require a long period to bring up the Vth and VIth Army Corps to its relief. Should Erzeroum fall before a sudden attack, there would be nothing to prevent the Russians from sending a force to seize the Bitlis Pass, which would effectually block the Bitlis route and compel the Turks to send all their southern reinforcements round by the Diarbekir–Kharput road, which would then be threatened from Bitlis.

Of the political importance of roads it will be unnecessary to say much. It will be sufficient to point out that facility of communications is essential to a firm grasp on the remote and turbulent tribes which at present arrest by their lawlessness the development of the country.

In spite of the vital importance of a proper system of communications to the general welfare of the country, from an economic, strategic, and political point of view, the Provincial Governments seem at present quite incapable of any systematic and sustained effort in the construction of roads. These are generally moderately well laid down in the immediate vicinity of the chief centres, but after a short distance they begin to deteriorate, until they finally merge into the usual caravan track, to reappear at intervals in the neighbourhood of other local centres. Often the surface of the so-called "chaussées" consists of a layer of small stones without any foundation, or else large rough stones are laid down with nothing to cover them.

The bridges are often badly constructed or are lacking altogether, whilst washouts are frequent owing to the absence of culverts. In most cases the roads soon fall into disrepair for want of upkeep, and the contractors, who are not always paid, scamp their work in the most flagrant manner.

The faulty system which leaves the construction of roads in each district entirely

to the discretion of the Local Government is responsible for the lack of continuity in the *réseau* of roads (which is strikingly apparent in the inclosed map). It is useless for an energetic Vali or Mutessarif to lay down roads in his own district if his neighbour neglects his duties. The authorities seem never to have grasped the elementary fact that 100 miles of perfect macadam is useless for wheeled traffic if one mile is left impassable for vehicles.

The ordinary caravan tracks which traverse the plains are easy enough in summer, but in winter they soon become mere quagmires, which are exceedingly trying to pack animals. Where they cross the mountains they are encumbered by loose stones and rocky outcrops, and are often not more than a foot wide where they thread their way between boulders and rocks or wind along the slopes of precipitous hill-sides. In order to profit by the few bridges that exist, long detours have often to be made. And yet the many ruined bridges and the bones of ancient roads which are often to be seen show that communications were once considerably easier than they are now.

The local authorities admit the urgent necessity of roads. The Central Government is also anxious for an improvement in the communications, particularly for the completion of the strategic Diarbekir–Bitlis route. The Local Government, however, can do but little with the means at its disposal. The Chief Engineer of the vilayet states that after payment of salaries, &c., £T. 2,000 is all that remains over for the actual construction of roads. This sum would be contributed by something under 17,000 persons, the total registered population of the vilayet being officially estimated at 400,000 souls.

In addition to the £T. 2,000 estimated as the balance of the road-tax remaining for road construction, however, Government can dispose of the services of some 5,000 labourers who prefer to put in four days' labour on the road to paying the capitation tax of 12 piastres. The nominal value of 5,000 men working for four days is accordingly about £T. 600, which should be added to the £T. 2,000 above mentioned.

Whether the Central Government will ever be willing to have the incidence of the road tax extended to those sections of the population which at present evade it, and whether it will ever grant subsidies for the construction of strategic roads which have an Imperial and not a purely local value, is problematical. Should it do so, the value of road contracts would be greatly increased.

Were the road contract not limited to so inconsiderable a sum, it might have been found worth while for the local contractors (who are bound by law to be Ottoman subjects) to engage the services of a foreign engineer provided with labour-saving machinery. For instance, a Blake-Marsden stonebreaker, costing 210*l.*, can turn out 8 tons of stone broken to road metal size per hour at a cost of ½*d.* for fuel. The employment of such a machine would simply revolutionize road-making in this country. The contractors, with such assistance, would be able to construct roads, according to the specifications laid down by law, far more cheaply and expeditiously than is at present possible. Indeed, they would be glad to do so, did their means permit them. The Local Government also professes itself to be favourably disposed towards such an idea.

In view then of the importance of roads to the commercial development of the country, and consequently to British trade, and of the advantage which in many ways would accrue to British interests if British capital were called upon to assist in developing the communications of the country, it is suggested that the necessary extraneous financial assistance might be given in the following way.

Sufficient capital to defray the cost of sending out an engineer with the necessary machinery might be put up by a group of British financiers or business men. The native contractors, in return for some slight remuneration, would technically represent the latter, in respect of the legal formalities required by Government, but, though they would be regarded officially as the actual contractors, the undertaking would be really in the hands of the British capitalists represented on the spot by their engineer.

It will probably be objected that a contract of £T. 2,000 spread over one year is too small to warrant the initial outlay required to send out an engineer with machinery; there is, however, something more to be considered than the profit to be derived from this particular project. It would afford an excellent advertisement for British engineering capabilities and *matériel*. It is not unlikely that a British engineer might find employment in one or more of the neighbouring vilayets, and it is more than probable that he would be able to sell stone-breakers, as native

contractors would be glad to obtain them after they had been instructed in their use. He might also act as an agent for various engineering firms and obtain orders for machinery and appliances necessary for the more profitable working of native industries and handicrafts. He might also assist native manufacturers by substituting steam for manual power and by supplying them with small engines. Indeed, as the only man in the country having a knowledge of modern scientific methods, he would have an almost unlimited field of activity before him, and he might even defray the cost of his journey by his agent's fees.

Should the scheme outlined above prove a success, there is no reason why its promoters should not embark on similar enterprises in other vilayets, where the assistance of His Majesty's Consular Officers would probably be of use to them. Moreover, the question of roads is closely bound up with that of transport, and, as will be shown in a subsequent report, once metalled roads are in existence a transport company should reap large profits. The same group of capitalists who financed the construction of roads might with advantage take up the question of transport, and they would be in a position to assist in the upkeep of the roads in return for a transport Concession.

If required, detailed information with regard to prices of labour and fuel, water supply, Government specifications for dimensions of roads and metalling, average metric cost of construction, conditions of contract, &c., can be supplied to parties interested.

(Signed) W. B. HEARD.

P.S.—It would no doubt be more profitable for all parties concerned if the contract could be extended over a number of years. Thus, if a minimum of £T. 2,000 per annum could be guaranteed for five years, the mileage of construction for the first year need not be restricted to the modest equivalent of £T. 2,000. Excess construction might be debited against the following year, and the contract completed before the full period had elapsed, a slight rate of interest being required from Government in return for accelerated construction. Such an arrangement, however, is not within the competence of the Local Government, and would require the sanction of the Ministry of Public Works.

W. B. H.

Inclosure 3 in No. 92.

Vice-Consul Heard to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2. Commercial.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, February* 20, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a Report dealing with transport conditions in Southern and Central Kurdistan.

Suggestions are added for an improvement in existing methods of transport on the Alexandretta–Aleppo–Diarbekir route:—

(*a.*) By the introduction of a service of specially constructed carts.
(*b.*) By the formation of a Motor Transport Company.

Allusion is also made to a possible improvement in the ferry arrangements at Birejik.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. B. HEARD.

Inclosure 4 in No. 92.

Report dealing with Transport Conditions in Southern and Central Kurdistan.

General.

THE question of transport is closely allied to that of roads and communications, the condition of which latter determines the nature of the means of transport which can be employed on them. Owing to the defective communications of Kurdistan,

animal transport is at present almost the only means used for the conveyance of merchandize. Excluding the Erzeroum district, which lies outside the scope of this Report, wheeled transport is only used on the Alexandretta–Aleppo–Diarbekir–Kharput–Samsun route (see map attached to preceding Report*), and that but to a limited extent. Rough ox-carts are employed in most districts for purely local needs, but do not affect the question of foreign commerce. Horses and mules, and, in certain non-mountainous regions, camels carry practically the whole of the import and export trade of Kurdistan.

Wheeled Transport.

Vehicles are scarcely used at all for the carrying trade of Diarbekir. Though there is little difference between the prices for wheeled and pack transport merchants prefer the latter, owing to the damage caused to their goods when carried in carts. The reason for the damage is probably to be found partly in the careless packing of the carters, and partly in the jolting caused by the uneven surface of the roads.

The type of cart generally in use is a four-wheeled vehicle known as "yuk arabasi," drawn by two or three horses. The floor space is narrow, and it is furnished with a rigid tilt, supported by irremovable arched ribs, which makes it unsuitable for stowing bulky packages. Its carrying capacity is between 9 cwt. and 13½ cwt.

Similar carts, but better finished and fitted with springs, called "jailis" are used for the conveyance of travellers. A few open waggons carrying a load of from 13½ cwt. to 18 cwt. have been introduced during the last two years.

The journey from Diarbekir to Aleppo is made in eight days, and from Diarbekir to Samsun in about twenty-two days.

Rates.—Transport rates (average) per cartload are—

Diarbekir–Aleppo	.. .. ..	£T. 3½–4 (£T. 1 = 18*s.*).
Aleppo–Diarbekir	.. .. ..	„ 4 –5.
Diarbekir–Kharput	.. .. ..	Medjidiehs 7 –9 (1 medjidieh = 3*s.* 4*d.*).
Diarbekir–Samsun	.. .. ..	£T. 7 –8.

It is possible that a larger and stronger type of cart, specially constructed for carrying heavy loads and bulky packages, would be found to carry goods more cheaply than do pack-animals at present. Four-horse teams or teams of oxen or buffaloes would probably be able to drag them over the rough bits of road.

Pack Transport.

Horses carry loads of from 270 lbs. to 302 lbs.

Mules carry from 369 lbs. to 420 lbs.

The average rate of progress for a caravan is six hours per diem at 3 miles per hour (= 18 miles).

Transport prices are governed by a variety of considerations, and vary greatly according to the season, district, and local price of grain.

Thus in spring and summer, when trade is brisk, prices are dearer, but in winter, when trade is slack, muleteers lower their prices, being anxious to save the price of horse-keep. In districts where forage is dear, prices are naturally higher. Thus, in the Bitlis Vilayet they are almost double what they are in Diarbekir. Pack-animals are at times difficult to obtain, as they are liable to be seized by Government for military purposes, or in order to transport grain to famine-stricken districts.

In winter, transport conditions often become very difficult, owing to deep mud or snow. In the higher regions transport ceases for long periods, when the passes are blocked by snow. Hand-sledges are then used by the inhabitants for local needs.

* Not printed.

Rates.—Average prices of pack transport:—

	Average Prices of Pack Transport per Kantar (1½ cwt.).
Aleppo–Diarbekir (12 days)—	£ s. d.
3 months (winter)	1 5 0 to 1 10 0
9 „	1 8 0 „ 1 16 0
Diarbekir–Aleppo—	
3 months (winter)	0 10 0 „ 0 15 0
9 „	0 13 4 „ 1 0 0
(Prices are cheaper this year, as muleteers have gravitated southwards owing to high price of forage in Bitlis, Van, &c.)	
Diarbekir–Kharput (5 days)	0 6 8 „ 0 8 4
	(this year 16s. 8d. to 18s. 4d.)
Kharput–Diarbekir	0 6 8 (this year 10s.)
Diarbekir–Seré (5 days)	0 10 0 to 0 15 0
Seré–Bitlis (3 days)	0 7 6 „ 0 10 0
	(this year 17s. 6d.)
Diarbekir–Bitlis viâ Zokh (7 days)—	
6 months (winter and spring)	1 5 0 to 1 10 0
6 „ (summer and autumn)	1 0 0 „ 1 5 0
Bitlis–Diarbekir viâ Zokh—	
3 months (summer)	0 12 0 „ 0 16 8
9 „	0 15 0 „ 1 0 0
Diarbekir–Erzeroum viâ Këghi (9 days)—	
Spring and summer	0 16 8 „ 1 0 0
Autumn	1 0 0 „ 1 6 8
(This route is closed by snow from November to May.)	
Alexandretta–Diarbekir viâ Killis and Biredjik (15 to 16 days)—	
3 months (winter)	1 13 4 „ 2 6 8
9 „	1 16 0 „ 2 13 4
Diarbekir–Alexandretta viâ Killis and Biredjik*—	
3 months (winter)	0 18 4 „ 1 5 0
9 „	1 6 0 „ 1 6 8

Observations.

It will be observed that prices for outward journeys are higher than those for return journeys. Muleteers discount costs of delay at their destination, and uncertainty of obtaining loads for their return by adding to their prices.

Certain routes are liable to pillage, but the Aleppo–Diarbekir route has been practically safe for the last three years.

It is evident that foreign trade is much hampered by defective transport. Prices are high and irregular, and fluctuate considerably. The drawbacks of pack-transport, such as small size of packages carried, injury through weather, and ill-usage, &c., are sufficiently well known. Delays are often caused when transport is not immediately available. Under present circumstances, it is not to be expected that the natives will of themselves do anything to improve existing methods, which have scarcely changed since pre-historic times.

It is accordingly perhaps worth while discussing whether it would be practicable and profitable for foreigners to undertake the task of improving and organizing the carrying trade of Kurdistan.

The Alexandretta–Aleppo–Diarbekir Route.

It is suggested that a beginning be made with the Alexandretta–Aleppo–Diarbekir route.

Here we have what is probably the richest trade centre in Kurdistan separated from its seaport by some 310 miles of road, of which some 126 still remain to be made. The following approximate figures (see Trade Report for 1907) will show

* This route is not used much for foreign trade, as most of it passes through hands of merchants and commission agents in Aleppo.

the importance of the foreign trade of Diarbekir, most of which at present passes over the route in question:—

	1905.	1906.
	£	£
Imports	329,100	384,380
Exports	150,500	246,700
Total	479,600	631,080

The excess of imports over exports indicates the unsound economic condition of the district, and may perhaps be largely accounted for by the fact that the want of roads and cheap means of transport limits the productiveness of the interior of the vilayet, which cannot bring its surplus produce to an outside market. Moreover, exports, being as a rule bulkier in proportion to their value than imports, are consequently more costly to transport. Accordingly, as transport methods are improved and cheapened, so much will the export of raw materials be encouraged and the purchasing power of the population correspondingly increased.

It is impossible to estimate the amount annually expended on the transport of merchandize over this route. It must, however, be considerable, in view of the importance of the foreign trade and the not inconsiderable local traffic which passes between Diarbekir, Aleppo, and the coast.

Taking 215 miles as the distance from Aleppo to Diarbekir, and 1*l.* 12*s.* as the average cost per 4½ cwt., the rate per ton per mile would work out at 8*d.* Taking 15*s.* per 4½ cwt. as the average for the return journey, the same rate would be a fraction under 4*d.*

Native merchants calculate that the cost of transport, commission, &c., on goods ordered from Constantinople amount on an average to no less than 6*d.* per oke (2·832 lbs.).

It is evident then that foreign trade is heavily handicapped by these heavy transport charges, and any system that could be devised for cheapening the carriage of goods from the sea-coast to Diarbekir would not only give a great impetus to the foreign trade of the country, but would also yield large profits to the originator.

Cart Transport Service.

The carrying trade might be cheapened and accelerated by organizing a service of "fourgons" specially constructed to carry loads of several tons. A fixed tariff would prevent the fluctuation of prices. Loads for the return journey might be booked beforehand through an agent in Diarbekir, which would save delay. A reserve supply of horses and draught oxen could be maintained at Aleppo and Diarbekir, and, if necessary, relays could be kept at intervals along the route to accelerate the post and passenger services.

On the sections where the road has not yet been made the track might be improved to some extent at slight expense by removing loose stones, paving the beds of streams, &c.

The initial expense of starting a few waggons in the way suggested above would be small. If the venture proved a failure, the vehicles could doubtless be disposed of at slight loss to carters plying on the Aleppo–Alexandretta road, where cart transport is extensively employed.

Motor Transport Service.

Given a macadamized road from Aleppo to Diarbekir, a service of motor traction-engines (such for instance as the Renard road trains) would probably prove a highly successful venture.

The chief points in its favour would be—

1. That it would probably secure a monopoly of the carrying trade between Alexandretta, Aleppo, and Diarbekir.

2. That it might count on securing much of the foreign transport trade of Kharput, which at present finds its only outlet at Samsun. (The foreign trade of Kharput for 1907 is estimated at 295,270*l.*) Its operations might some day embrace

a large part of Kurdistan, if ever the road system joining the chief trade centres (see map) is completed.

3. That it would contribute to opening up the country to foreign trade and would facilitate export, thereby increasing proportionately the value of the traffic receipts.

4. That it would enable shippers to quote through transport rates from port of shipment to Aleppo, Diarbekir, and other towns in the interior. This would assist British firms greatly in obtaining orders from native merchants.

5. That it would act as a feeder to the Bagdad Railway, or would cut across it and take away a good deal of its trade to Alexandretta, as might seem most desirable. (It is assumed that a motor train, which draws only full waggons and which can reduce its service at slack seasons or increase it when trade is brisk, can carry goods at cheaper rates than a railway train which is obliged to run every day, whether full or empty.)

A British Company would no doubt have some difficulty in obtaining a Concession from the Ottoman Government for starting motor transport on this route, but as motor services are now being established in other parts of the Empire, there is at any rate some precedent for such a project.

It is suggested that the Company might offer to carry the mails, transport troops and military material at reduced rates, and place its rolling-stock at the disposal of the Government in case of mobilization. It might also undertake the immediate construction of the necessary sections of the route, and engage itself to keep the roads in repair by an arrangement with the provincial Governments. For these services it might receive some compensation from the Imperial Government, such, for instance, as a Concession for the exploitation of the rich Arghana-Maden copper mines, at present worked in a primitive fashion by native concessionnaires.

Apart from the intrinsic merits of the scheme as a financial proposition, there is no doubt that as a first step in extending British commercial interests in these regions it would have far-reaching results, more especially if the Company which undertook it were to interest itself in other commercial enterprises, which by its intimate connection with the trade of the country it would have ample opportunity for studying.

(Signed) W. B. HEARD.

Euphrates Ferry.

Mention of the ferry over the Euphrates at Birejdjik has been omitted in the foregoing Report. Practically all the traffic between Syria and Kurdistan crosses the river at this point. The stream is 200 yards wide, but increases to 700 or 800 yards in flood time (April). The current is rapid, and the mean depth is 5 to 6 feet. The ferry service at present consists of clumsy craft propelled by a pole and steering sweep, with a carrying capacity of about eight loaded pack-animals.

The tariff is *2d.* per man, *3d.* to *5d.* per pack-horse, *5d.* to *8d.* per camel, *10d.* to *1s. 8d.* per cart. The higher prices are asked in flood-time.

When carried down by the force of the current, the ferry-boats have to be dragged upstream by tow-ropes. The whole system is primitive in the extreme, and the ferry service might with advantage be taken in hand by the Motor Transport Company suggested above.

The right bank is approached across a wide expanse of shingle which forms the bed of the river when in flood. This should be traversed by a concrete causeway terminating with a travelling gangway. The left bank is steep too, and the river does not spread here at its rise.

The ferry-boats which should be roomy enough to accommodate a large cargo of sheep or cattle (which at times are driven in vast flocks to Aleppo) might cross by wire hawsers, or on the system known as "flying bridges," which would prevent their being swept down below the landing-places, as is at present the case.

The ferry over the Euphrates between Kharput and Malatia, and, indeed, ferries over a large number of other rivers might with advantage be supplied with improved *matériel*, and the improved ferry at Birejdjik might serve as a model for the rest of the country.

(Initialled) W. B. H.

[9837] No. 93.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 123.)

Sir, *Pera, March 17, 1908.*

WITH reference to your despatch No. 89 of the 4th instant respecting the story that some German colonists had settled on the Farsan Islands and that Germany was negotiating with Turkey for the acquisition of these islands, I have the honour to report that Mr. Fitzmaurice took an opportunity in the course of conversation with the Grand Vizier to allude to this report, and that his Highness assured him that there was no foundation for the story.

I have, &c.
(In the absence of the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

[9844] No. 94.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 130.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March 18, 1908.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 35 of the 8th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith two despatches from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van on the situation created there by the discovery of the revolutionaries' stores of ammunition.

I have, &c.
(In the absence of the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 94.

Vice-Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 3.)

Sir, *Van, February 9, 1908.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency, in confirmation of my telegrams of the 6th and 7th February, that the following events have occurred here during the past week. Such discrepancies as there may be between this report and the telegrams are due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate information at the time that the telegrams were sent, on account of the fighting and the state of panic prevalent here.

On the night of the 4th February an Armenian named David, who for the last five years had been a sworn "soldier" of a "fedai" band of Tashnak revolutionists and a confident of Aram, one of their chiefs, and who thus knew most of their secrets, came to the Vali and told him that he wished to turn informer against them.

I believe his reasons for this step had something to do with a woman, his fiancée, and her relations with Aram.

He informed the Vali, to start with, that a large quantity of ammunition was hidden in the wall of the sanctuary of the church of the Monastery of Surb Grigor, which is near the village of Kopans, and some seven miles east from Van.

On the morning of the 5th the Vali sent some gendarmes to Surb Grigor, to see if there was any truth in this statement. On search being made three separate depôts were discovered, two in the walls of the sanctuary and one between the vaulting and roof of the transept of the church, making a total of some 200,000 rounds of ammunition, mostly Mauser and Martini.

It should be mentioned, for the credit of the Turkish soldiery, that absolutely no damage was done to the church or its furniture, except in so far as was necessary for purposes of search.

In the afternoon a squad of forty soldiers was sent and brought this trove into Van; it amounted to thirty horse loads. The same afternoon bodies of soldiers and gendarmes made searches in various houses in the Armenian quarter of the "garden city," being conducted in this by the informer David, dressed as a soldier. Further large quantities of ammunition and rifles were found, bricked up in the walls of

houses, and concealed in places which it would have been impossible to discover without the aid of an informer, except by demolishing the whole house.

In making the search, the plan adopted was to post troops some 100 yards distant from the house and around it, and then to effect an entry.

In one house an Armenian named Sebough, a chief of the Armenist faction of the revolutionaries (the Armenists are the pacific, as against the aggressive section of the revolutionaries), seems to have lost his head and tried to escape. He fired off two Mauser pistols in the air, and was killed by the troops. Altogether the munitions seized on the 5th amounted to between 300,000 and 400,000 rounds of ammunition and about 300 to 500 guns and pistols.

The Vali could not give me the exact figures, as they had not then been fully collected.

About 1 p.m. on the 6th some 100 soldiers and gendarmes, conducted by David, continued searching in a lane in the Armenian quarter. They occupied three houses with troops and commenced the search.

The first house they drew blank, as the cache, though there, was empty; in the second a hole in the wall showed that a largish depôt had been recently emptied, presumably during the previous night, while further search disclosed in another hiding place 300 packages of dynamite, and some few thousands of cartridges; the third house disclosed more dynamite and ammunition. During the search, a small crowd of Turks had collected at the west end of the lane, and a similar crowd of Armenians at the eastern end. In the meanwhile the "fedais" had quietly occupied a large house at the western end of the lane, belonging to one Isaac or Sahag Bey, and some other houses and gardens, surrounding the troops.

The lane being narrow, the booty was carried down by the soldiers to its western end, and was being placed in a waggon and cab in front of Sahag Bey's house, when, at 3·30 P.M. (from what I can make out from the various eye-witnesses' accounts), a volley was fired by the "fedai," with the intention of killing David and only frightening and driving off the troops.

David was not killed, but, with the other troops, left the booty, and took cover in various houses and gardens, from which they returned the fire of the "fedais." Several soldiers left their rifles on the ground.

Ahmed Bey, acting commandant of gendarmerie, who was conducting the search, was still in the houses in the lane with some troops and gendarmes, and these returned the fire of the "fedais" from thence.

There is a general impression, and the Vali and Ferik both inform me that the fact was so, that three bombs were thrown at the start. This, however, I believe to be untrue. My Consulate happens to be about 100 yards from the house of Sahag Bey and to have three stories, and I had an excellent view of operations from the roof, more especially as the house of my next-door neighbour, at the corner of the cross-roads, was one of the "fedai" rallying points. At 5 P.M. one party of "fedai" had retired from Sahag's house, bringing with them the loot and rifles abandoned by the soldiers to my neighbour's house and gardens, whence they fired occasional shots, apparently just to keep the troops to their posts, and I am certain made no attempt to kill the soldiers, as if they had wished to they could have done so easily. The soldiers were massed together in batches behind walls and houses, where the "fedais," who are, I believe, as a rule good shots, could flank-fire them from a distance of 100 yards.

I am now informed by the Vali that one zaptieh and some four Turkish civilians were killed, two zaptiehs and three soldiers wounded. However, the fact that a zaptieh and a Turk—who seem to have somehow got in between the two "fedai" positions—were killed early in the fight, just in front of my Consulate, leads me to believe that my dragoman's statement of a total of seventeen casualties may be true, and, from private information, the statement of the Vali to be certainly incorrect.

At 5 P.M. the dynamite which had been left in the road in front of Sahag Bey's house exploded. The explosion was terrific, though the fact that it had not been inclosed in a bomb made the effect considerably less. Sahag's house and the others near were shattered, but I believe no casualties occurred.

The débris and dust rose in a column hundreds of feet in the air. Ahmed Bey tells me that he ordered the troops to fire on it, thus detonating it, because he saw that it would be impossible to carry it off and he did not wish the "fedais" to regain it. This I believe to be untrue, and think that the "fedais" exploded it themselves before leaving. Shooting got desultory when the dusk fell, about 5·30, and ceased altogether at about 6 P.M., when it was quite dark.

During the fighting reinforcements of troops had arrived at Hach Poghan, and

had approached to within 100 yards north of the Consulate; but at this point the fire from the "fedais" round the Consulate made them take cover in the houses and gardens. Other reinforcements also arrived from the town, from the south-west of the house of Sahag.

After dark the troops in the lane and round the house of Sahag retired to the town, and at 10 P.M. the house was pillaged and burned by Moslems from the adjoining Moslem quarter.

At nightfall the inhabitants of the Christian quarter, south-east of the Consulate, deserted the quarter, and brought their bedding and valuables to houses near the Consulates of my French and Russian colleagues and the French and American mission buildings. That they did not favour me with their presence was due, I understand, not to any personal or official unpopularity, but to the fact that my house was within 10 yards of a tactical position; and the sight of two corpses, and armed "fedais" and troops on either hand, had a disturbing effect on the gentle Armenian. These people came through the gardens at the back of the houses, and not through the streets.

In order to make the situation more clear I will say that the city and bazaar of Van is at the foot of a rock in a plain. The citadel is on the rock. The town and city is entirely Moslem. From the town a road runs east; on either side of this road are houses, with large gardens and vineyards, with mud walls some 6 feet high. Various small lanes branch off from this main road. About 3 miles from the city a large cross road comes in, and at the junction is a small bazaar. This spot is called Hach Poghan ("the cross place"), and is about the centre of the garden city.

Roughly, it may be said that west of Hach Poghan is a Moslem quarter and east of it is Christian. A native of Van can pass from one end of the garden city to the other, without going along the roads, by means of holes in the walls, &c.; but the troops almost invariably keep in the streets, and are unintelligent and badly led. The "fedais" invariably keep to the gardens, are intelligent, and fanatically devoted to their cause.

Early on the morning of the 7th instant, after riding round the disturbed quarter, I discussed the situation with my French and Russian colleagues, and we called upon the Vali together to discuss the best means to insure safety for the peaceful population and to confine the trouble to the troops and the "fedais." (I mean by the word the sworn soldiers of the revolutionary bands, whose members are usually foreign subjects.)

We found the Vali and Ferik together and discussed the situation—the necessity for keeping the Kurds and Hamidieh from coming into Van, for dispersing the crowds of indignant Moslems that were gathering and coming towards the Christian quarter, and the absolute necessity for preventing them from entering those quarters.

We pointed out to him what a tremendous blow he had already dealt to the "fedais" and how successful he had been so far, and urged that it would be better to leave matters to quieten down for the present, when he would have more chance of dealing another blow quietly. If he took an aggressive course some few "fedai" might possibly be killed, but at a certain loss of many soldiers and with the probable consequence of a massacre. At this moment news was brought to the Ferik of the fact that four "fedais" had been located in a large house at Hach Poghan, and he gave orders for the house to be surrounded and a field-gun to be brought into action.

The Ferik, like most half-civilized people, has a glorified idea of the utility of a cannon—a useless instrument in such a case, and one well qualified to increase the panic. However, by various arguments and stories, we managed to induce him to employ a less robust method, with the result that the house was found to be empty. I mention this episode to show the character of the Ferik.

Both Vali and Ferik proved to be most amenable, and sincere in their desire to prevent trouble, and I think I may almost say that in the case of the Vali our counsels were not needed. Anyhow, he had the crowds dispersed, and troops were posted at various points on the north and west sides of the disturbed quarter, with orders to prevent the entry of Moslems. The Vali also informed us that the informer David was dead.

My colleagues and myself tried to disperse the Armenians, and to induce them to return to their houses and to open the bazaar next day, but although we prevailed on the principal ones to do so, the mass of the people would not, owing to the various false and startling rumours current.

In the meantime, I believe the "fedais" are in four parties of about eight each,

under their chiefs, "the doctor," Aram, Sarkis, and Ishkhan. They are in occupation of the four corners of their quarter, while the troops only occupy the streets outside it, on the north and west sides.

On the morning of the 9th, my colleagues and myself thought it would be advisable for one of us to see the Vali from time to time, so as to try to counterbalance any evil influence that the other officials might possibly exert upon him. To this end I saw him and the Ferik in the morning, and after discussing the advisability of continuing the search, as everything went to show that the "fedai" would by now have removed their stores from the places that David had known, so that if Government continued the search it would probably have no success, and if another attack should be made by the "fedais" it might lead to events that the Government would be unable to control. I managed to induce the Vali to say that I might inform your Excellency that he would not for the present continue the search in Van town, or make any attack on the "fedais." He also informed me that David was not dead, having been hidden by the troops. I returned to my colleagues with this good news, and we were about to order the Armenians to return to their own houses in the deserted quarter, when the dragoman of one of my colleagues informed us of grave rumours which were current that three regiments of Hamidieh were on their way to Van, and that orders had just been received from the Palace to follow up and capture the "fedais" at all costs.

There were other exciting rumours, and we concluded that it would be best that both my colleagues should also receive the assurances that the Vali had given me, before we took the responsibility of advising the Armenians to return to their own houses.

For this purpose they called on the Vali and Ferik, who contradicted the rumours, and gave the required assurances, and to-day, the 9th February, our dragomans and cavasses have been inducing the people to return, and I hope that to-morrow the bazaar will be opened, and that things will be on their way to resume their normal state. The troops continue to occupy certain posts, which I consider tends towards security and peace, though the frightened Armenian is a difficult person to reassure; still, for the time being things are quiet, though there are two things to be feared: 1st, that the "fedai" may do something rash in their desire to kill David, and thus bring on another emeute; 2nd, that the Vali is only waiting for reinforcements of troops to arrive before continuing the campaign, and that when these shall come he may be strong enough to attack the "fedai," but not strong enough to prevent Kurds and Bashi-Bozouks joining in if many soldiers are killed.

To guard against the first danger, my colleagues and I intend to induce the Vali, if possible, to have David sent away somewhere safely out of danger.

For the 2nd, we can do nothing but try to induce the Vali not to recommence action till he is sufficiently strong to keep the Moslems under control, and then to go about things as quietly as possible. Personally, I am of opinion that at present there is not much to fear, as the events of the past few days tend to confirm the opinion that I have often expressed to your Excellency of the tactfulness and capability of the present Vali, Ali Riza Bey, to handle this difficult vilayet and the revolutionary movement. The best compliment one could pay him was paid by "the doctor," the "fedai" chief, who said that he did not like this Vali because, by his quiet and calm way of doing things, he was causing the "fedai" movement to lose ground.

By this quietness of the Vali, and the absence of fussiness and of any active policy of aggression, the "fedais," having no pressing grievance, have been occupying themselves with trivialities and have quarrelled; this it was that led to this capture of what I am informed is about half their entire store of ammunition, and is a more severe blow to them than any aggressive action that the Government have ever made. I attach a Proclamation made by the "fedais" on the subject.

I have just received your Excellency's telegram of the 8th February. The congratulations are due to the Vali and Ferik, to whom I will give them. It is too much to hope that the actual culprits will be punished, as none of the "fedai" are likely to be caught, at least alive, by the Government, and they sell their lives dearly.

A few remarks about these "fedai" may interest your Excellency. They are the Tashnak section. There are at present in Van the four leaders above mentioned, and I believe about thirty sworn soldiers, mostly Russian Armenians. These men are all fanatically devoted to their cause.

Their ideas, on which they act, are as follows. They see that European intervention for the amelioration of the condition of Armenia is out of the question. They see, moreover, that European Powers, when they have anything that they wish to get out of the Sultan, effect their end by what is practically terrorism, *e.g.*, by the sending of a squadron of battle-ships to the Bosphorus; thus they hope to attain their ends by a policy of terrorism, and the punishment of the instigators of organized oppression. In methods they are absolutely unscrupulous.

Their objects are, they say, to obtain a better government. They do not object to Turkish rule as such, but are against the present system of bad government, and they are at present using every effort to induce the Young Turks and Kurds to join in their movement.

During the time of the late Ali Bey they had some success in this endeavour, but with this new Vali I believe that the Turks have rather cooled, while with the Kurds it is merely a matter of paying them not to interfere.

They are determined to kill David, for which one can hardly blame them, not only from revenge, but also to save their own skins, as he knows them all personally, their relations, their addresses, their secrets, their hiding-places and rendezvous, as well as the names of all the various Young Turks and Kurds who have had dealings with them.

The members of the Tashnak are divided into two grades: first, "soldiers" who form the armed bands, and who are sworn to devote their lives to the cause; second, "members," active and passive. The active members are the more devoted ordinary inhabitants of the city of Van, and the villages near, who have a rifle and ammunition hidden in their houses, and would be called upon in case of need or when the time for open revolution is ripe. The passive members are practically the whole remaining Armenian population, who, either by inclination or force, are made to contribute to the funds of the Society, or are made use of, when necessary, by the Committee.

In my No. 14 of the 4th August, 1907, I informed your Excellency of the growing strength and activity of this movement and of their designs. The events of the past few days seem to bear out my statements. I am informed that they had about 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition and some 1,800 rifles concealed round Van, but I say this with reserve.

If all their members were like their soldiers the Turks would have a bad time; but the Armenians, particularly those of Van, are but a poor lot, and, during the events of the past few days, many of the most aggressive and active members in time of peace were the first to take refuge in the houses of foreigners.

I have, &c.

(Signed) BERTRAM DICKSON,
Captain, R.F.A.

Inclosure 2 in No. 94.

Vice-Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 4.)

Sir, *Van, February 17, 1908.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that since the fracas with the "fedai" on the 6th February affairs in Van have quietened down, and have now resumed their normal condition.

The Vali has been promoted to the grade of Bala.

Although there is a calm at present, as is always the case in this country, one cannot be sure that the various disturbing causes may not at some time cause another outbreak. My personal opinion, which is shared by my French and Russian colleagues, is that the Vali, Ali Riza Bey, if left to himself, and not interfered with by orders from the Palace, is quite capable of controlling in a conciliatory manner any situation which may arise.

The principal of these disturbing causes is the presence in Van of the four "fedai" bands with their chiefs, Aram, "the doctor," Serkis, and Ishkhan, and the fact that these "fedai" believe that the Government is afraid of them and cannot harm them; this idea has, perhaps, been stimulated by the temperate action of the Vali during the recent fracas, an action not due to weakness but to humanity for the innocent townspeople. These "fedai" will not be able to leave the town until the spring, and with their avowed intention to kill the informer David, who at present is

living under the protection of Ahmed Bey, the Acting Commandant of Gendarmerie; their presence is a menace.

Another cause is the discontent of the Moslem population, as voiced by several prominent officials, who say that they cannot permit armed Armenian revolutionaries to remain in the town without some action on the part of the Government. One can hardly blame them, and in any civilized country such inaction would be criminal, but with the peculiar circumstances in this case the Vali's temporate policy is the only one. These Moslems have expressed themselves pretty plainly to the Vali, and it is more than possible that they may complain to the Palace of the Vali's inaction and of his supineness to protect the true interests of the Turks. There is no doubt that they could make out a very plausible case, and one well calculated to appeal to the Sultan's susceptibilities. If this should occur, the Palace may force the Vali to take action against the "fedai," which, although it may kill a few "fedai," will certainly mean the death of many soldiers and innocent Armenians, and will in no way crush out the revolutionary movement. The Vali realizes this, and my colleagues and myself are trying to induce him to introduce various minor reforms and measures which we think will ameliorate the lot of the Armenians, relieve the situation, and thus act as an antidote to the revolutionary movement.

The difficulty found by the young Armenians in gaining a means of livelihood in this vilayet, and the consequent discontent, seems to us a great factor in the recruiting of these "fedai." If this difficulty could be surmounted it would be an advantage to every one. It is to this end that our efforts are being directed. It is too much to hope, in this country, that our efforts will be attended by any great success, but at any rate I believe they will do no harm.

Some few battalions of troops are expected here shortly from Moush and Erzeroum on account of the frontier question. When they arrive I shall not be surprised if the Vali recommences action against the "fedai," though the chances are that by that time these latter will have left Van for the hills, where they will be hard to catch; at any rate, I do not anticipate anything serious.

The "fedai" are making great efforts to enlist the sympathy and the co-operation of various Moslem and Kurd discontents. During the late Ali Bey's time they had a fair measure of success, but at present I understand their advances are meeting with but a lukewarm response, while it is certain that the killing of the soldiers and zaptiehs on the 6th February has kindled among the Moslems a feeling of intense resentment against the Armenians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) BERTRAM DICKSON,
Captain, R.F.A.

Inclosure 3 in No. 94.

Sketch Map of Van.

[Not printed.]

[10053] No. 95.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(*Received March* 23.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of telegrams from the Viceroy, dated the 21st and 22nd March, relative to the situation at Abu Musa.

A copy will be sent to the Director of Military Operations and Director of Naval Intelligence.

India Office, March 23, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 95.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *March* 21, 1908.

ABU MUSA. Your telegram dated 4th instant.

Paragraph 1.—Papers forwarded with German Case contain nothing in support of first German point, viz., that Salim, the uncle of Sheikh Sagar, is owner of mines, and that Sagar had no right to annul lease which Salim gave to a Company in his capacity as owner. Island is shown by its history to be integral part of Sheikh of Shargah's dominions, used for grazing of live stock of ruling Sheikh and his family, and fact that Salim only resided in island on sufferance was referred in two letters addressed by Sheikh Sagar to Resident in 1884. Moreover, when necessary, Sheikh Sagar has continued to send his own live stock annually to island for grazing. It is true that Salim, since he was ousted from Sheikhdom by Sagar, has enjoyed income of Abu Musa Island by personal and oral arrangements with Sheikh Sagar. Sheikh admits this, and says that, in order to stop Salim's complaints as to inadequate allowance given him by Sheikh, he has also allowed Salim to retain rent from mines paid under terms of contract now in question. But Salim, in a letter dated the 21st ultimo to Sheikh Sagar, has now categorically disclaimed all right of ownership in island, and has declared that he merely acted as proxy for Sagar in granting lease. Examination of Agreements between Sagar and Salim, dated respectively 1883, 1884, and 1889, supports genuineness of this declaration. Salim's right to revenue of Abu Musa Island is not mentioned in these Agreements, which show that fixed stipend granted to him by Sheikh Sagar was Salim's chief means of support. Fact that produce of mines had been leased by Salim, while acting as Regent of Shargah, was referred to by Sheikh Sagar in a letter to Resident, dated the 11th October, 1902. German argument, therefore, based on rights of Salim, fails.

Paragraph 2.—We pass to the second German point, viz., that Sheikh's cancellation of lease was unjustifiable, even if power to grant it emanated from himself. Subject to such general control as we exercise, Sheikh is law to himself, and has absolute right to do as he pleases. Sheikh's territorial rights over island have been admitted by the Germans. Nothing to limit Sagar's right as Sheikh to cancel lease under any circumstances he chose was contained in Agreement. Under this Agreement Sheikh took personally a commercial share in undertaking for so long as mines are workable and in lease.

Lease was cancelled by Sheikh for good reasons, viz.:—

(1.) Lease did not contemplate grant of monopoly to foreigner, particularly after Residency Agent at Shargah had given Sheikh a general warning in December 1904 to refer to Resident before dealing with Wönckhaus.

(2.) Monopoly had, therefore, been given by Hassan Samaiyeh without the consent of a partner, Esa-bin-Abdul Latif, who accordingly complained of being ignored to the Sheikh. Description of Hassan in heading of contract as "owner and holder of Concession" was particularly objected to by Esa. It is claimed by Germans that grant of contract had really been known and approved of by Esa. This is not borne out by documents forwarded by Germans, and the reverse is suggested by documents which Major Cox now forwards. The 1st June, 1906, was date of execution of deed of contract between German firm and Hassan Samaiyeh. Monopoly of purchase for four years and preference for new contract on expiry of old one was given by it to German firm. Hassan concealed existence of monopoly and preferential right of renewal when, on the 11th June, 1906, he reported Agreement to Esa's father, Abdul Latif, who is our Residency Agent at Shargah. It is significant that this letter is omitted from German Case. In reply, Hassan was requested by Abdul Latif on the 14th June not to make lease to German firm or sign deed of contract with them. On the 26th June Hassan received from Malcolm, with whom concessionnaires had engagements, request for a copy of Agreement and inquiry whether other European firms could enter into similar contracts. Both points were evaded by Hassan in his reply of the 13th July, and in a letter of the 14th October to Malcolm Hassan refused to send copy of Agreement, and said that secrecy of transaction had been enjoined by German firm. Finally, at the end of October 1906, he was induced to give Residency Agent at Lingah a copy. It was not until the 16th December, 1906, that he sent a copy of it to Abdul Latif. Latter wrote on receipt of document, on the 23rd January, 1907, that nullification of contract was desired by his son Esa, who did not agree to it. Esa wrote to Sheikh Sagar on the 20th February requesting

that contract should be cancelled. In a letter dated the 8th March, 1907, to Abdul Latif, Hassan asserted that details of Agreement had, at time of its execution, been communicated by him to Abdul Latif, and that latter had then expressed his approval in writing. No evidence either of letter or reply is forthcoming. Resident writes that in going through Abdul Latif's correspondence he has found some office copies missing, or too faint to be deciphered; he adds, however, that Abdul Latif gave his solemn word that we need be under no apprehension that anything more than appears in letters hitherto produced is contained in any letter of his of which an office copy is not available. He was quite frank, and Major Cox sees no reason to doubt his word. It is of especial importance to note, in connection with Esa's request for cancellation, that he knew nothing of objectionable description of Hassan as "owner and holder of Concession" contained in lease until he got its text.

Paragraph 3.—Evidence produced by Major Cox disproves third German claim, viz., that as Hassan was managing partner on behalf of others, action taken by him did not, in any case, require consent of Esa or other partners. On the 25th November, 1907, German Consulate dragoman went to Bunder Abbas, and attempted, unsuccessfully, it would appear, to obtain the signature to a document, agreeing to sub-contract, of Nejef-bin-Ali, a claimant to a share in Concession.

Paragraph 4.—An actual share in original Concession has been secured by Wönckhaus with a view to strengthening his case. The arrangements for cancelling the lease had, however, already been made when the purchase of this share was effected, and Sheikh's right to determine lease is in no way diminished thereby. It is clear that the purchase was merely an afterthought. As by its terms the German firm was admitted to a leasehold interest in the island without the Sheikh's consent, it affords an argument in justification of action taken by Sheikh, inasmuch as it contravened assurance given by Sheikh to Political Resident that, without the knowledge of the British Government, he would not do anything of the kind. An infringement of the 1892 Treaty might have resulted.

Paragraph 5.—German Case does not appear to shake our own Case, which seems to be strong.

Paragraph 6.—We concur in suggestion made in Resident's telegram of 10th instant, repeated to you on 12th instant, as regards future working of mines.

Paragraph 7.—With Foreign Secretary's letter of 12th instant we sent you papers on which above statement is based. We are sending you by mail a referenced copy of this telegram.

Inclosure 2 in No. 95.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. *March* 22, 1908.

ABU MUSA. My telegram of the 16th ultimo, repeating telegram No. 116 of the 12th ultimo from Resident, Persian Gulf.

Formal claim for profits of Concession was entered on the 16th ultimo before Consul at Bunder Abbas by Nejef, son and heir of Nakhuda Ali, partner mentioned in Inclosure No. 2 of German Case. Major Cox inquires if case should now be taken up by Consul. Provided Consul is careful that correct legal procedure is observed, we see no objection. As Major Cox reports that Hassan and Brown are now working together at Lingah at construction of account books, it might be useful to secure Hassan's account books as exhibits in case. See second paragraph of telegram dated the 18th ultimo from Resident, which we repeated to you on the 21st ultimo. Resident now inquires whether production of originals of Inclosures Nos. 4D and 4E of German Case should be demanded from Brown. To call latter as a witness in the case brought by Nejef Ali might be a means of doing this.

10313] No. 96.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 26.)

Sir, *India Office, March* 25, 1908.

IN reply to your letter of the 17th instant as to the conduct of the Deputy Governor of Lingah in ill-treating a native of Bahrein and refusing the good offices of the British

Agent, I am directed to state that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the terms of the instructions which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposes to telegraph to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran on the subject.

I am to inclose copy of a telegram which has been sent, in accordance with Sir E. Grey's suggestion, to the Government of India as to the action which could be taken locally by the Resident in the Gulf to vindicate our position.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 96.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, March* 24, 1908.

FLOGGING of British subject at Lingah. See telegram from Resident, Persian Gulf.

Formal protest will be lodged with Persian Government by His Majesty's Minister at Tehran against Lingah Government's action in refusing British Agent's good offices and inflicting arbitrary punishment on British protected subject of Bahrein. I should be glad to learn, by telegraph, views of Major Cox as to what action for vindication of our position could successfully be taken on the spot. Attention is drawn by Foreign Office to fact that Persian authority at Lingah is of shadowy nature.

[9206] No. 97.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 67.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March* 26, 1908.

WITH regard to the information reported in your telegram No. 77 respecting the treatment of a Bahrein subject in Persia, I am asking the India Office that Major Cox should be asked for his views of what action could successfully be taken to vindicate our position.

You should make a formal protest to the Persian Government against the action of the Governor of Lingah in arbitrarily punishing a British-protected subject, and in declining to recognize the good offices of the British Resident.

[10525] No. 98.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 27.)

(No. 77.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March* 27, 1908.

I RECEIVED on the 25th instant a telegram, dated the 23rd, from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that the Armenian revolutionary who had betrayed the deposits of arms, &c., had been shot by another Armenian in the bazaar. A massacre of innocent Armenians was then begun, largely owing to the instigation of the gendarmes. The General in command of the troops at Van intervened promptly, and stopped the massacre, and a massacre which seems to have been begun by signal in other quarters was also stopped, though not till 33 had been killed, 6 wounded, and 23 were missing.

The foreign Consular officers, who at once proceeded to the scene, escorted the Armenians to their homes, and presented a demand to the Vali that the ringleaders of the massacre should be at once arrested, and that soldiers should be placed in the bazaar and each quarter where an outbreak was to be feared, each detachment being under an officer, who was to be held personally responsible for the maintenance of order.

Yesterday I received a further telegram from Captain Dickson, in which he stated that there was a danger of a general massacre of Armenians, and that the panic was universal. The Armenians were crowded together in one quarter without any food. The traitor was dying. The Consuls had sent a collective note to the Vali urging him to adopt stern measures to maintain order.

I am assured by the Grand Vizier, whom I saw yesterday, that some of she instigators of the massacre have been arrested as the result of the inquiry which, he says, has already been held, and that he is giving orders for further steps to be taken to insure order. His Highness added that a decoration was being conferred on the Commander-in-chief in recognition of his energy in stopping the massacre. This step was suggested by Captain Dickson.

[10525] No. 99.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 62.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March* 27, 1908.

SITUATION at Van.

With reference to your telegram No. 77 of the 27th instant.

His Majesty's Government hope that measures to improve the lot of the unhappy Armenians will now be adopted. They have learnt with satisfaction that it was by the action of the Commander-in-chief that the massacres were stopped.

[10776] No. 100.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 141.)
Sir, *Pera, March* 25, 1908.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 76 of the 25th ultimo respecting the Hindié barrage scheme, I have the honour to report that Mr. Money, Messrs. Pearson and Sons' engineer, who arrived here on the 29th ultimo, was introduced to the Minister of Public Works and the other proper officials of that Department by one of the Dragomans of the Embassy, and had several interviews with them. Up to the 13th March, the last date announced, no other firm had put in a tender, apparently thinking, like Mr. Money and Sir W. Willcocks, who came here from Egypt for a few days, that the Turkish plans for the barrage were unworkable, especially in a climate like that of Bagdad, where ferro cement would not be durable. Both Mr. Money and Sir W. Willcocks were of opinion that a suitable barrage, together with the indispensable accompanying work in the Hilla bed of the Euphrates, could be carried out at the same expense as that fixed for the Hindié barrage alone, according to the plans of the French engineer, and Mr. Money proposed to the Minister of Public Works to visit the spot and then submit plans. The Minister said that he could not definitely accept any proposal of the kind, but that he was thinking of publishing a notice extending by six months the period for tenders. Mr. Money arranged with his Excellency that this notice is not to appear in the newspapers until he has had time to consult Messrs. Pearson, and left for England for that purpose on the 22nd instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

[10916] No. 101.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 80.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Pera, March* 30, 1908.

I HAVE received telegrams from Captain Dickson from Van informing me that the position continues extremely serious.

In reply to your telegraphic inquiry, I have to report that the Ottoman Government has directed that the troops in the town should be increased with a view to giving the Governor-General more power to quell the disturbances.